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*The*  
*Fortner Family*



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CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST  
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# THE FORTNER FAMILY 1974

## Preface

During the early years of my marriage to Robert B. Jennings, his mother, Mrs. Ellie (Fortner) Jennings, spent much of her time with us. "The Olden Days" have always been a subject of great interest to me, so I listened to her reminisce with pleasure and curiosity, too. Her early childhood had been spent in the midst of the Fortner family on her father's plantation near Terry, Mississippi. Their plantation adjoined that of her grandfather, and there various members of the family "came and went".

The story of her father's family following the Civil War was one of sadness. Another version of "Gone With The Wind", the lovely plantation life before the War and their struggle to survive a life thrust upon them after the South fell, - one for which they were ill-prepared. Ellie's grandfather, Benjamin Fortner, died in 1871 and his sons were confronted with the management of the plantation, most of which by that time was mortgaged to raise money for crops and other expenses. Her uncles began to disagree over the best road to survival. One by one they moved away and the plantation was eventually lost. The once close family became separated and failed to keep in touch. I make mention of this to give you some idea of how difficult it has been to trace the children of Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner.

We were fortunate in one way. The family Bible was preserved and for some years has been in the custody of the Ike Fortner family in Gulfport, Mississippi. In it the names and dates of birth of Benjamin and Ellen Fortner's children are recorded. The Bible also records the dates of birth of Benjamin and Ellen and the names of their parents. With this we began!

The 1850 census of Hinds Co., Miss., shows that Benjamin was born in South Carolina. The 1880 census of that county, where his brother, Thomas S. Fortner, lived stated that their father, John, was born in North Carolina. This ultimately sent us to South Carolina, where we found many Fortners, surely of this family because of the continued use of the same given names. As of this time, however, we are unable to separate the several John Fortners who were there. We have been to Jackson, Miss., several times, using the wonderful State Archives. On other occasions, trips have been made to Raymond, Miss., where we examined the old Hinds Co. court and deed records. We have also gone to Vicksburg, Miss., where some of the records of the Warren Co. Fortners can be found at the courthouse. That family descends from Thomas Fortner, who came to the Warren Co. area in 1798. Tradition in both their family and ours is that they were related. The same given names prevail in both families.



In furthering our research, we have examined the records in several other Mississippi Counties, as well as the courthouse records of Catahoula and Acadia Parishes in Louisiana.

We were particularly pleased to find Mrs. Anna Gillis Magee in New Orleans. Her grandmother was Martha Laura Fortner, a daughter of Benjamin and Ellen. Laura lived in Anna Gillis' home until Anna was in her teens, and she remembers well some of the little stories that have provided a few clues. Anna also has the Fortner album containing photographs of Benjamin, Ellen and many of their children.

The Warren Co. Fortners will be written about at another time, and perhaps I shall be able to link some of the many other branches that we have found.

The earliest Fortner records we have found involve the exciting and fanciful story of a young girl, Isabella Duncan of Scotland, the daughter of Lord Archibald Duncan. She came to America in the latter part of the seventeenth century to marry her young lover. The ship was captured by pirates on the way, and she was taken to Pennsylvania and there sold into bondage. Her master was a Mr. Fortner from New Jersey, as the story goes. He took her home as a housemaid, and his son Benjamin fell in love with her. Benjamin worked and saved every cent he could and finally was able to pay off her debt of servitude. They were married in New Jersey and had eleven children. Some of the descendants of Benjamin and Isabella Fortner migrated westward to Illinois and Iowa, and others moved into Pennsylvania. As of this date, I have no idea if the North Carolina Fortners descend from this New Jersey family or if they came directly to Virginia from England and moved on to North Carolina. After the Revolutionary War they scattered over the Southern States.

One problem that has complicated our research is the spelling of the name. Tradition in the family is that the name was originally spelled Faulkner. We have found it spelled Faulkner, Falkner, Falconer, Forkner and Faulkoner, as well as Fortner, and in the South Carolina records it may be spelled different ways in the same document. The records indicate that the Fortners were farmers by trade. They were Methodist in faith and apparently law abiding citizens, for we have found few court proceedings or records of controversies which often provide a great deal of genealogical data. They were people with great determination and, we are told, quick tempers.

I have no way of estimating the number of letters that have been written seeking information, or the number of telephone calls that have been made. The Fortners are notoriously poor correspondents, but wonderful people to visit with, - if they can be found. Please keep in mind that in many instances we have had to rely on the census records for the names of descendants, and that these census records are not always as accurate as





they might have been. The ages and places of birth of those listed may vary with each census, depending upon how well informed the person giving this information was. Someday, a more complete history of the family may be given, tying our branch to others. In the meantime, you will know something about the origins of your family. Perhaps you may be able to add some facts, and some fiction as well, to this Fortner family genealogy.

While my husband, Bob, does not have the same enthusiasm as I do for genealogical research, he is an attorney and has worked with interest in the many courthouses we have visited, especially in the areas of land acquisitions, maps, estate proceedings, litigation and Civil War records, leaving it to me to reconstruct family relationships. Without his help, including the typing of this manuscript, I could never have compiled this record.

*Virginia L. Jennings*

August 1974





## JOHN FORTNER

John Fortner was born during the year 1776 in North Carolina (1850 census of Copiah Co., Miss. and 1860 census of Catahoula Ph., La.). As a young lad, he moved to South Carolina, where he married the first of his three wives, Bersheba. We believe that she was an Arrington and probably lived on the adjoining plantation. There are numerous Fortner records in Edgefield District, South Carolina, which show that several members of this family were there when the 1790 census was taken. There are numerous land transactions between these people, but none of the material provides us with any proof of their relationships to one another.

John and Bersheba Fortner were in South Carolina as late as 1813, for their daughter, Ann Fortner, stated in a subsequent census record that she was born during that year in South Carolina. We do find that a John Fortner was selling his land in Edgefield District from 1808 to 1811, perhaps in anticipation of a move. The children of several other Fortners, Russell, James and Thomas, seem to have remained there for a longer time. There were no Fortners found in Edgefield District after the Civil War.

Where John Fortner lived during the time following his departure from South Carolina until his arrival in Mississippi we do not know. He is next found in Wayne Co., Miss., on the tax roll of 1823. He owned 160 acres of land and had two slaves. He may have followed Arthur Arrington to Wayne Co. The latter arrived there in 1818 and gradually acquired 500 acres of land and 22 slaves. Arthur Arrington died about 1843. He may have been a brother of Bersheba. The same Arrington names such as Burrell are common in both families. The records of Wayne Co. were all destroyed by fire in 1895, so it is impossible to connect these people from the county records. There was also a Thomas P. Falconer who came to this county shortly after John did. He was a prosperous citizen and died about 1848 (Proceedings of Masonic Grand Lodge of Miss., 1882). Again, we cannot tell their relationship, if any. John Fortner was in Wayne Co. until 1825, when he moved his family to Hinds Co., Miss. This part of Mississippi had been Choctaw lands until about 1823, when they were acquired by the United States. John Fortner's son, Martin, acquired two grants of land from the government in 1827, but we were unable to determine when or from whom John acquired his land.

John Fortner and his sons settled in that part of Hinds Co. that was known as Byram. Old Byram was four miles southwest of Elton, Miss., and about five miles north of present day Terry (see area map of Hinds Co.). Mr. Brieger in his book "Hometown, Mississippi" says that Arthur Fortner was one of the pioneer settlers. Although only his name is mentioned, early deeds establish this as the general area in which they all settled. It was generally described as being in Sections 11, 12,



13 and 14, Township 4 North, Range 1 West. Benjamin and Arthur also had 800 acres near Raymond, as well as other lands in Hinds Co. Some years later, Benjamin moved about three miles farther west to the Springridge area. This seems to be the same part of the county where Newtown was located on the Springridge Road.

Bersheba Fortner died after 1825, for their son, Thomas Square Fortner, was born that year. She and John were the parents of twelve children: Arthur, Martin, Benjamin, John A., Thomas Square, Burrell H., Ann, Eliza Jane, Sabrina Minerva, Nancy Amanda, Epsey Eleanor and Sarah E. Fortner.

On 1 Mar. 1827, John was married a second time to a young lady, Nancy Kelly (Hinds Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. 1, pg.51). The older children may not have been too happy about this, or the young mother who began her own family may not have been able to cope with such a large family. At any rate, in 1828 John Fortner leaves several slaves and some property in trust for his youngest children's care and upkeep. He also gives some furniture, cattle and milch cows to his daughter, Eliza Jane. We find Benjamin taking the young children to live with him, for in the 1830 Hinds Co. census he is head of the house which includes them.

In 1837, John Fortner sold his land to John T. Davis, but remained in Hinds Co. until after 6 Apr. 1845, for on that day he makes provision for his two daughters by his second marriage (Hinds Co. Conv. Rec. Vol. 17, pg. 381). He says he has already provided for his other children. John donates to Lauretta Edna and Susan Josephine Catherine Fortner and their heirs three slaves: Matilda, Phoebe and Jack. Two of these slaves, Phoebe and Jack, are the cause of a later law suit. John Fortner also donates to Nancy, his wife, in conjunction with the two children "all my stock of every kind and description . . . consisting of horses, cattle and hogs and all my household and kitchen furniture and farming utensils, also our wagon and one yoke of oxen". It sounds as though old John may have been concerned about his health and did not want to leave any unfinished business. However, he was to live for a long time.

Before 1850, John and Nancy had moved south to Copiah Co. There Nancy gave birth to a daughter, Cynthia, and in 1850 another daughter, Mary, was born. Nancy died soon after and John decided to move to Catahoula Parish, La., where several of his children by his first marriage were living. A daughter by his second marriage, Lauretta, was also living there with her family, and John may have thought she could help take care of her two younger sisters.

John Fortner seemed to love his family, and spoke affectionately of his children in his various donations to them. Apparently, he loved and needed a home life, and he was also





quite a guy! On 18 Mar. 1853, John Fortner married a third time to Delilah Wood (Catahoula Ph. La. Conv. Rec. Bk. A, pg. 201). Fortunately for our research, John Fortner sold several slaves that belonged to the estate of his second wife, Nancy Kelly, and his daughter, Lauretta, called him to account. The suit was settled out of court, but did establish the relationship of this family.

On 30 May 1860, John Fortner sold his land to Moses Walker, and his wife, Delilah, relinquished any claim she might have. They appeared in the 1860 census of Catahoula Ph., at which time he was 84 years old and Delilah was 40. Three children were listed: Emanuel, age 6, James, age 4, and a daughter, Cityfias, age 2. Old John must have died soon after, for we find no further mention of him or Delilah and their children.

#### CHILDREN OF JOHN AND BERSHEBA FORTNER

I. Arthur Fortner died 26 Jan. 1835 in Hinds Co., Miss. Benjamin Fortner was named administrator of his estate, and posted a \$50,000. bond. This was a large sum of money in those days, but the estate of Arthur Fortner was extensive. He had been a very successful young man. His wife was named Martha, and on 21 Dec. 1836 she was married again to William Porter (Hinds Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. 1). Arthur at his death left a daughter, Susan E. Fortner, born 1825, who married William H. Rose on 18 May 1841 (Hinds Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. 2, pg. 294). At her marriage, her stepfather gave her four slaves from her father's estate. The 1850 census gives the names of her children as Laura, age 7, Cornelia, age 5, and Arthur, age 2. We have no further record of the Rose family.

All of the probate records concerning Arthur's estate are missing, as well as the will, but we find that on 3 Aug. 1837 his widow's second husband, William Porter, bought at public auction 1,040 acres of land (some in Sec. 11, T 4 N, R 1 W) from the Estate of Arthur Fortner (Hinds Co. Conv. Rec. Vol. 16, pg. 388). We later find that Arthur's daughter, Susan Rose, sold 240 acres of land on 13 Feb. 1847, the purchaser being her husband, William H. Rose (Hinds Co. Conv. Rec. Vol. 18, pg. 528). It is also noted that, under the provisions of Arthur's will, his executors were instructed to purchase a "small place to place the 10 slaves reserved by said will for the support of his wife and child".

II. Martin Fortner was born 1804 in South Carolina. On 4 Oct. 1827 he received Patents Nos. 53 and 2273 from Choctaw Land Office. In the 1830 Hinds Co. census, he was married but had no children. Later census records indicate they had a daughter whose name is not known, but who died young. His wife was named Ann. They moved to Catahoula Ph., La. about 1838 and bought 40 acres on the water of the Bushby. Martin sold this land in 1844 to John Pitman. Ann apparently died



shortly after 1840, and on 27 May 1842 he married Lucy Tune. He owned and operated a grist mill on the fork of the Hemp-hill Creek in the Pine Hills District. Martin died there some time after 1862. Lucy (Tune) Fortner did not remarry and in 1897 gave her daughter, Margaret, the home place with the consent of the remaining children, Bashaba and Susan. Martin and Lucy (Tune) Fortner had five children whose names are in the 1860 Catahoula Ph. census: 1. Bashaba, age 17, married W. H. Parker, a cousin, on 6 Feb. 1862. She was married a second time to T. J. Pentecost of Catahoula Ph., and they had at least three children: Alice, Edward and Truman Pentecost. 2. B. A. Fortner, a twin I believe, age 17 in 1860. No record. 3. Elisha Fortner - no record. 4. Susan Fortner, age 10. She mar. 18 July 1866 John Sandifer. The 1880 census of Catahoula Ph. gives Susan as age 30 and John as age 31. Their children were: (1) Mary Sandifer, age 12; (2) John Sandifer, age 10; (3) Thomas Sandifer, age 8; (4) Lucy Sandifer, age 5; (5) Peter Sandifer, age 4; (6) Wiltz Sandifer, age 1. Susan's mother, Lucy (Tune) Fortner, age 67 was living with them. 5. M. E. Fortner, female age 6, was Margaret E. Fortner who married first a Mr. Williams. She was married a second time to Thomas M. Francis on 2 Mar. 1888 (Bk. C, pg. 286, Catahoula Ph. Mar. Rec.). She received a donation of land from her mother in 1897. There may have been another daughter, Mary Fortner, who married James Robertson 18 Jan. 1883 at the home of Lucy (Tune) Fortner (Catahoula Ph. Mar. Bk. B, pg. 903), but I am inclined to think that this Mary Fortner is the daughter of old John and Nancy (Kelly) Fortner.

III. Benjamin Franklin Fortner, born 14 Mar. 1806. See the next section for his record.

IV. John A. Fortner was living with his brother, Benjamin, in 1830. He married in Hinds Co. Miss. 14 Dec. 1830 Cintha (Synthia) Ann Howell. Benjamin Fortner was his bondsman. On 3 Mar. 1832, he and Cintha sold 50 acres with improvements. This adjoined his father's land. On 22 Apr. 1839, John A. was deceased and Benjamin had been named the administrator of his estate. Cintha was apparently deceased and no children are mentioned. On 27 Jan. 1841, Benjamin told the court that all of John's household goods and papers had been destroyed by fire. "Only one cow was left and it has since died".

V. Burrel Fortner, born 1815. The census says Miss., but I believe this is in error. Burrel moved to Catahoula Ph., La. with his brother, Martin, and some of his sisters. He was a farmer and was married there 29 Feb. 1844 to Eliza Zeigler (Catahoula Ph. Mar. Rec. Bk. 13). In 1850 he was a widower living in Hinds Co., Miss. at the home of Thomas Square Fortner. He seemed to move back and forth between the two states. In 1870 he was back in Catahoula Ph. No records of his descendants were found.





VI. Thomas Square Fortner. He was the youngest son, born 1825, and may have been the youngest child of Bersheba Fortner. Thomas Square died 23 Sept. 1885. He was married on 23 Dec. 1846 to Margaret Satterfield (Hinds Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. 2, pg. 513). The date of his death and the following information came from Hinds Co. Probates Nos. 663 and 2033:

Thomas S. Fortner died intestate and his wife was named administrator. He had a fruit orchard and a plantation of 238 acres in first district of Hinds Co. He had been seriously ill before his death, and a Mr. Fox agreed to harvest his crop of corn, cotton, peas and potatoes. In addition to the home, furniture and barns, he had 11 head of cattle, 6 hogs, 1 horse and 7 mules, one lot of farm implements, 1 buggy, 1 lot of carpenter's tools, 1 corn sheller, 1 oat cradle, 1 grass blade, 1 lot of spades and shovels, 1 wheelbarrow, 1 man's saddle, 1 double barrel shotgun, 1 cotton planter, 1 grindstone, 1 pr. cotton balances, and the crop mentioned above.

Margaret Fortner died 17 June 1898 and her son, William, with whom she had lived, was made executor of the estate. Margaret had been ill with a disfiguring cancer for years, and made her home with him. He seemed to be a man of great patience, for his sisters gave him constant trouble. They were full of petty arguments and even accused him of taking a gun that belonged to his father. He proved his father had given him the gun and he had used it for many years. Finally in 1902 the estate was settled and his share was \$120. which he signed over to the lawyer for his fee. The last we found of this Wm. M. Fortner, he was said to be a resident of Lincoln Co., Miss. Wm. M. Fortner seemed to have had great compassion and understanding, and was certainly devoted to his mother.

Thomas Square and Margaret Fortner had four children:  
1. Flora Fortner, born 1847 (Hinds Co. 1860 census), married W. D. Conly. Since she was living in 1902, there were no names of her children given in the probate rec.; 2. William M. Fortner, born 1849 - no record of his children; 3. Fanny Fortner, born 1851, married T. H. Fox. She died before Sept. 1901, leaving the following children: (1) a daughter who married Mr. Bell. They had two children, Anna and Bettie Bell; (2) Maggie (Fox) Bonham; (3) Sally (Fox) McDaniel; (4) Arthur Fox; (5) Hunt Fox; (6) Luther Fox; (7) Douglas Fox. 4. Margaret Fortner, born 1859, died young.

VII. Ann Fortner was born 1813 in South Carolina (Catahoula Ph. La. census). On 19 Apr. 1828, John Fortner gave his consent for his daughter, Ann, to marry Samuel Old (sometimes spelled "Olds" or "Olls"). Both were under age and Samuel had no guardian (Hinds Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. 1, pg. 59). By this marriage she had a daughter, Mary Ann Old (Olls), born 1829 or 1832 (census dates vary) in Miss. She married Rubin Valentine of Catahoula Ph. La., but no date is given (Conv. Rec. Bk. G, pg 410). The 1870 Catahoula Ph. census lists four children:



(1) William Valentine - age 12; \*(3) Elisha Valentine - age 4; (4) S. Valentine, a daughter - age 2. There may have been other Valentine children, but we did not find them there in 1880. Ann (Fortner) Olds also had a daughter, Epsa A. Olds, who was living with her sister, Mary Ann Valentine, in 1850 and her age is given as 12 years in the census. Several documents and marriages were witnessed by J. T. Olls. He may have been their son, but I have no proof. \*(2) Luci Valentine-age 6;

Ann (Fortner) Olds was married a second time in Copiah Co., Miss. to Wm. Parker on 9 Sept. 1838. Burrel Fortner was a witness (Copiah Co. Mar. Rec., by Upton, pg. 32). By this marriage she had at least seven children: 1. Cymantha E. Parker, born 1837 (Was this a child of Mr. Parker by an earlier marriage or is her age given in error?); 2. Sarah Parker - age 11; 3. W. H. Parker - age 8. He married Basheba Fortner on 6 Feb. 1862 in Catahoula Ph., La. No known heirs; 4. Nancy Parker - age 6, born in La.; 5. Andrew C. Parker - age 3, born in La. (These five children are recorded in Catahoula Ph., La. census 1850.) In 1847 Ann and William Parker were legally separated, but were reconciled and had two more children: 6. A. Parker, a daughter, born 1850; and 7. B. Parker, a male, born 1852. Sometime prior to 1860 Ann married a third time to Mr. S. Day. There were no children. Mr. Day probably died prior to 1870, for Ann (Fortner) Day was then living in the home of her daughter, Mary A. Valentine, in Catahoula Ph., La.

VIII. Eliza Jane Fortner. She was given a slave named Matilda by her father, John Fortner, on 31 Dec. 1834 "because of natural love and affection I have for my daughter". (Hinds Co. Conv. Rec. Bk. 5, pg. 288). No further record.

IX. Sabrina Minerva. She was given a slave girl named Judith by her father, John Fortner, "because of the natural love and affection which I have for my daughter" (Deed dated 31 Dec. 1834, Hinds Co. Conv. Rec. Bk. 5, pg. 286). No further record.

X. Nancy Amanda Fortner. "Because of the natural love and affection which I have for my daughter", John Fortner donated to her a feather bed and furniture, and a slave girl named Francis. (Hinds Co. Conv. Rec. Bk. 5, pg. 288.) No further record.

XI. Epsey Eleanor Fortner. There is no record of her other than the deed of trust from John Fortner "for the maintenance of my three children, Epsey Eleanor, Sarah E. and Thomas" (Hinds Co. Conv. Rec. Bk. 1, pg. 140, dated 25 Feb. 1828). It was noted that Ann (Fortner) Olds named one of her daughters Epsa (Epsey), perhaps for her.

XII. Sarah E. Fortner. She was provided for by a donation of slaves, cattle and furniture "for maintenance of my





three children . . . . " (see XI. above). She married John Stovall, son of Josiah Stovall, on 6 June 1838 (Hinds Co. Mar. Bk. 2, pg. 116). No record of children. On 20 Dec. 1844 she married Benjamin Stanley in Catahoula Ph., La. (Conv. Bk. G, pg. 298). No record was found of them in the census records.

CHILDREN OF JOHN FORTNER  
BY HIS SECOND MARRIAGE  
TO NANCY KELLY

XIII. Laurretta Edna Fortner was born 1828 (1850 Copiah Co. census). She married a widower with two children, Samuel R. Simpson. Laurretta moved to Catahoula Ph., La. and on 15 Dec. 1857 was married a second time to W. A. Edwards (Catahoula Ph. Mar. Rec. Bk. A, pg. 161). The 1870 Catahoula Ph. census lists the following children, but the first three were perhaps children by Mr. Edwards' first marriage: 1. W. G. Edwards - age 16; 2. Josephine Edwards - age 14; 3. A. S. Edwards, female age 12; 4. J. A. Edwards, male age 6; 5. E. A. Edwards, male age 4; 6. L. M. Edwards, female age 6 mos.

XIV. Susan J. Fortner, born 1839 (1850 Copiah Co. census). She is probably the Susan J. Fortner who married Wm. Pentecost on 25 May 1853 in Catahoula Ph. (Mar. Rec. Bk. A, pg. 219).

XV. Cynthia Fortner, born 1848 (1860 Catahoula Ph. census). No further record.

XVI. Mary Fortner, born 1850 (1860 Catahoula Ph. census). This is probably the Mary Fortner who married James Robertson at the home of Lucy (Tune) Fortner.

(John and Nancy may have had two other children, Newton and Kelly Fortner, but I have no proof so will not number them.)

CHILDREN OF JOHN FORTNER  
BY HIS THIRD MARRIAGE  
TO DELILAH WOOD

XVII. Emanuel Fortner, born 1854. No further record.

XVIII. James Fortner, born 1856. No further record.

XIX. Cityfias Fortner, born 1858. No further record.



## FAMILY RECORD.

BRING UP YOUR CHILDREN IN THE ADMONITION OF THE LORD.

## BIRTHS.

Benjamin son of John & Buckle  
Fortner was born on the 14<sup>th</sup> day  
of March. A.D. 1806

Eleanor Fortner consort of Benj  
Fortner daughter of Joshua & Phoebe  
Mullen was born March 2 1815

Arthur Churston son of Benj  
and Eleanor Fortner was born on  
the 4<sup>th</sup> day of February A.D. 1836  
Henry Fortner son of Benj and  
Eleanor Fortner was born Oct 11<sup>th</sup>  
A.D. 1837

Benjamin Franklin son of Benj  
& Eleanor Fortner was born Sept 4<sup>th</sup>  
A.D. 1839

John Newton Hamill son of  
Benj & Eleanor Fortner was born  
January 29<sup>th</sup> 1842

Mary Louisa daughter of  
Benj & Eleanor Fortner was  
born March 31 1843

Mary Ellen daughter of  
Benj & Eleanor Fortner was  
born February 18<sup>th</sup> 1844

Thomas Square son of Benj  
& Eleanor Fortner was born  
December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1845

John Lane son of Benj &  
Eleanor Fortner was born  
July 16<sup>th</sup> 1847

Reuben Drake son of Benj  
& Eleanor Fortner was born  
on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 1849

Richard Watson Fortner  
son of Benj & Ellen  
Fortner was born on the  
22<sup>nd</sup> Jan 1851

Dusan Groer Fortner  
daughter of Benj & Ellen  
Fortner was born on the  
2<sup>nd</sup> of Feb 1853

Lida Jennie daughter of  
Benj & Ellen Fortner was  
born Sep. 13<sup>th</sup> 1855





## FAMILY RECORD.

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD.

## Deaths.

John Newton Hamill  
son of Benj and Ellen  
Fortner, departed this life  
on the 11<sup>th</sup> of Jan 1843

Lida Jennie daughter  
of Benj & Ellen Fortner  
departed this life on the  
5<sup>th</sup> of March 1863 aged  
seven years, five months and  
twenty three days

Mary Ellen daug  
-hter of Benj &  
Ellen Fortner  
departed this life  
on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July  
1864 aged 20 yrs  
five months and  
25 days

Richard W. Fortner  
- his life March  
1874 aged 23 1/2

Mary H. Lee son wife  
of Thomas Fortner departed  
this life Sep 13<sup>th</sup> at 1881  
aged 26 y. 6 months

Benjamin Fortner  
departed this life May  
6<sup>th</sup> A.D. 1871, aged 65 years  
1 month and 22 days

Eleanor Fortner departed  
this life Feb 18<sup>th</sup> 1894  
aged 78 yrs 11 months  
13 days

Lassie Fortner departed  
this life Oct A.D. 1876  
aged 8 months

Noel Fortner departed  
this life January A.D.  
1891 aged 22 years

John Lane Fortner  
departed this life  
Dec 12<sup>th</sup> 1899, aged  
52 years 5 months

Livingston C. Fortner  
departed this life 1 O'clock  
A.M. Oct 18<sup>th</sup> 1917  
age 35 years 8 mos & 1 day



## BENJAMIN FRANKLIN FORTNER

Benjamin Franklin Fortner, the son of John and Bersheba Fortner, was born on 14 Mar. 1806 in South Carolina, and came to Hinds Co., Miss. with his parents (Family Bible and 1850 census Hinds Co.). After his mother's death and his father's remarriage, Benjamin for some reason became the head of the house and in 1830 all of his brothers and sisters who were not married were living with him. Some of the girls were young ladies then, and apparently capable of running the home. On 16 Dec. 1830 he married Mary R. "Polly" Davis, the daughter of Wiley Davis, who was "not yet twenty". They probably began their home in the area of Springridge and New Town, and their property backed up to the area that was to become the famous Cooper's Well Resort (see map).

In view of the fact that our Fortner family lived and owned acreage for some time in the vicinity of Cooper's Well during the years when it was a thriving resort for people seeking the mineral waters as a cure for various maladies, we are digressing at this point to include some notes from a "History of Cooper's Well (or Cooper's Dream)" by Wm. D. Anderson, M.D., of Waterproof, Tensas Parish, La., dated 11 Aug. 1848 and published in 1851 by Mississippi Power Press, Jackson, Miss.

The land on which the well was situated was purchased by Rev. Preston Cooper in 1837. Rev. Cooper decided to move his dwelling to the top of the hill (called Cooper's Hill), but there was no water available, so he decided to dig a well rather than depend upon a cistern. At 30 feet the digger struck very hard rock and quit. Rev. Cooper dreamed that a man appeared and ordered him to resume digging the well, so he employed a second digger, who worked through the rock which was 9 feet thick but struck another, harder rock, and quit after two days. Two months later, Rev. Cooper had another dream, and decided to hire a third digger, who penetrated the rock to a depth of 30 feet before quitting. Nearly a year passed when Rev. Cooper had another dream, and the same familiar face appeared and ordered him to employ a fourth digger and complete the well. He then dreamed that he did so, and the man obtained water, but said, "It stinketh mightily, so that you may never use it". Rev. Cooper employed a fourth digger, and he reached a depth of nearly 100 feet when water appeared from a crevice in the rock. The digger said, "It is water, but it stinketh mightily, so you never can use it". This was on Friday, 16 Sept. 1841, and it confirmed his last dream exactly!

In 1842, Dr. Daugherty, of Raymond, Miss., stopped at the well to quench his thirst. Later he became ill and was recovering slowly. He recalled that the





water had had a very exhilarating influence on his system, so he went back and started using the water and became entirely well in a few days. He then sent patients there and told others about the water. The well became known for its medicinal properties, especially for troubles of the stomach and bowels.

The area was developed over several years, and vessels of water were shipped to various parts of the country. Invalids flocked to the well by 1849 and 1850. There were frame hotel buildings having about 200 rooms for guests, with a ballroom and an observatory built to a height from which it was possible to view the rolling countryside for great distances, even to Vicksburg forty miles away.

The author pointed out that there were fine roads leading to Cooper's Well from Jackson and other towns, but the cheapest, easiest and most agreeable conveyance was the railroad running from Vicksburg to Brandon, connecting at Bolton's Depot with the railroad from that point (27 miles east of Vicksburg) to Raymond, within 4 miles of the well. The fare from Vicksburg to the Well via the Vicksburg and Raymond railroads was about \$2.50, which included the stage fare, four miles, from Raymond to the Well. From Jackson to the Well, by the same roads, the charge was about \$2.00. It was also stated that persons from New Orleans could reach Cooper's Well in about three days via steamboat to Vicksburg and the railroad.

In 1830, the same year that Benjamin Fortner and Polly Davis were married, the Springridge Methodist Church was organized. Early members recalled the original structure which was built with slave labor from the Crisler place. Other members donated lumber and building materials. All of the lumber was sawed and cut by hand. The original church contained an area for slaves of the family to attend worship service. After the freeing of the slaves, this area was used for a school room. The earliest records in existence show that in 1852 Benjamin Fortner was a trustee. Prior to the building of the church, services were probably held in various homes as was the custom. The members usually brought lunch with them for the family, so that Sunday was their day of worship and fellowship. After dinner on the grounds, they would hold a service and then begin the trek back home. Mrs. R. C. Upton, in her history of the Church, says:

"The circuit rider came by horseback and arrived once a month. He usually came on Friday and stayed in one of the members' homes until Monday. An early Methodist Minister and member of this



church recalls stories of family carriages with slaves in attendance coming to church on the Sabbath. Ladies in gay crinolines, carrying parasols, were escorted to the door of the church by the slaves, who then went to the section provided for them."

(History of Springridge Methodist Church, by Mrs. R. C. Upton, as contained in the Miss. D.A.R. Cemetery and Church Records, Vol. 1955.)

These early records also show Benjamin's interest in his and other children's educational welfare, for on 2 Oct. 1854 the Springridge Academy was established. It was built across the road from the Church.

Benjamin Franklin Fortner was also a Mason. He was a member of the St. Johns Lodge at Springridge in 1848. On 13 Aug. 1859 he was listed as a Trustee of M. E. Methodist Church and Masonic Hall at Terry, Miss.

Just a year after Benjamin's marriage to Polly Davis, she died in childbirth and the child did not survive. It has been said that the home they had begun was not as yet complete, and apparently he still had a number of his brothers and sisters living with him. Benjamin purchased several adjoining pieces of land and increased his holdings. As the area developed, one of the nearby families was that of Joshua and Rhoda Mullen. Benjamin was a large, handsome man and financially well established, so it was natural that the young girls in the neighborhood cast their eyes in his direction. It is told in the family that Ellen Mullen would watch him ride by on his beautiful horse, and hoped their paths might cross. There were several springs in the area where the neighbors met to visit. Perhaps they met there or at the newly-established Springridge Methodist Church and found a mutual interest, for on 6 Apr. 1835 they were married (Hinds Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. 1, pg. 263).

Ellen Mullen's parents, Joshua and Rhoda Mullen, came into the Choctaw District about 1833 from Lawrence Co., Miss. (see "Allied Families"). Ellen's name was really Eleanor. She was born 2 Mar. 1815 (Bible) and died 18 Feb. 1894. Mrs. Ellie Jennings says she is buried in the old Town Cemetery at Terry. There is no marker on the plot.

On 26 Jan. 1835 Benjamin's brother, Arthur, died leaving a very large estate. Benjamin was named executor and posted a bond for \$50,000. which gives an indication of the estate's value. This must have added greatly to Benjamin's responsibility, and with his own large holdings made him a very busy man. Benjamin and Ellen completed their home, but on 26 Aug. 1836 they sold it to Joseph and Sarah Abney (560 acres). For some reason, the deal was not satisfactory and the next year





they bought the property back, the deed stating that Benjamin and Ellen were living there. The 560 acres were located in Sec. 31, T 5 N, R 1 W; Sec. 36, T 5 N, R 2 W, and Sec. 1, T 4 N, R 2 W (see map). As previously indicated, the land in Sec. 36 was near the site of Cooper's Well. The land in Sec. 1 (just south of Sec. 36) was in an area designated on an early map as "Seven Springs". The records indicate that Benjamin and Ellen lived in that area for perhaps 15 years or more, until they moved to a place on the Pearl River near what became the site of Terry, Miss.

Benjamin and Ellen's first son, Arthur Arrington Fortner, was born in 1836, and they apparently named him for Benjamin's recently deceased brother, whose estate he was then administering.

In 1839 Benjamin mortgaged the plantation for \$10,000. and bought stock in a new bank at Jackson, Miss. During this year his brother, John A. Fortner, passed away and Benjamin was named executor of that estate. Within the past two years, he and Ellen had had two more sons, Henry Turner and Benjamin Franklin, Jr., and in 1842 John Newton Fortner arrived. The year 1843 touched them with their first immediate sorrow, as little John, just a few days short of being one year old, died. They were blessed though with a daughter this same year, the first girl, Martha Laura!

Benjamin was a real "wheeler - dealer" in lands, as shown by the Hinds Co. records at Raymond, and he was continually adding to his holdings. In 1852, perhaps because of the tremendous influx of people into the Cooper's Well Resort, or for other reasons more related to farming, such as talk of building a railroad, he began to acquire acreage on the Pearl River several miles southeasterly from the above described 560 acres that made up his homeplace. By deed dated 14 Oct. 1852, Benjamin purchased Lots Nos. 10, 11, 12 and 13 of Sec. 12, T 3 N, R 1 W, containing about 160 acres, for \$1,170. This Sec. 12 had for its eastern boundary the Pearl River, as did Sec. 1 to the north and Sec. 13 to the south, in both of which Benjamin was later to acquire lands (see map). As a result, these Sections were irregular in shape and were surveyed into lots rather than into quarters.

Another incident of particular interest to the Fortner family was the yellow fever epidemic in 1853, which struck the entire area of Cooper's Well, Springridge and New Town. It is reported that this epidemic began following a large ball held at the Resort which many of the people from surrounding communities attended, and where they were exposed to the disease by one of the guests. Many people died, including several doctors in the area, and it is easy to imagine the concern Benjamin and Ellen must have had for their family.

The community of New Town, according to a "History of



Terry, Mississippi", by Mrs. E. H. Birdsong (Published in "The Terry Headlight" on 13 Feb. 1948 and 20 Feb. 1948), was established about 1811. The site of New Town is said to have been at what is known today as "Wynndale", several miles southeast-erly from the present community shown on the Hinds Co. highway map as "Springridge". Some time after the yellow fever epidem-ic of 1853, what is now the Illinois Central Railroad entered the area and there was considerable agitation as to just where the right-of-way would be located. The railroad was built in 1856, and it by-passed the Springridge-New Town area. Mr. W. D. Terry offered to give land for a town to be located on the rail-road, provided that the town would bear his name. His offer was accepted, and the Town of Terry was founded. (Mr. Terry's home is also said to have served as the first stop for the stage-coach on the Jackson road.) It appears from the above cited History of Terry that the New Town community was moved two or three miles south to Terry, and the Hinds Co. highway map does not show any such community.

On 9 Sept. 1856, Benjamin bought from Augustus Catching, Sr., for \$8,652.00 (represented by four promissory notes), about 1,000 acres of land in Secs. 1, 11, 12 and 13, T 3 N, R 1 W (see map), adjacent to and adjoining the 160 acres in Sec. 12 which he had purchased in 1852. We also found that on 13 Nov. 1856, Benjamin obtained title from the U. S. Land Office, by entry, to Lots 1 and 8 of Sec. 12 and Lot 1 of Sec. 13, con-taining 72.16 acres. These were undoubtedly classed as "swamp lands", for which Benjamin paid 12½¢ per acre, or a total of \$9.02.

Benjamin also acquired lands across the Pearl River in Rankin Co., Miss., in Secs. 6 and 7, T 3 N, R 1 E, which ad-joined his Hinds Co. lands in Secs. 1 and 12, T 3 N, R 1 W (see map). We have not visited Brandon, the county seat of Rankin Co., to check Benjamin's land transactions, but certain lawsuits involving his estate in Hinds Co. Chancery Court show that he died possessed of some 618 acres of land in Rankin Co. (No. 224, Crisler et al. v. Henry T. Fortner et al., and No. 514, Dortch v. Anna Gibbs et al.).

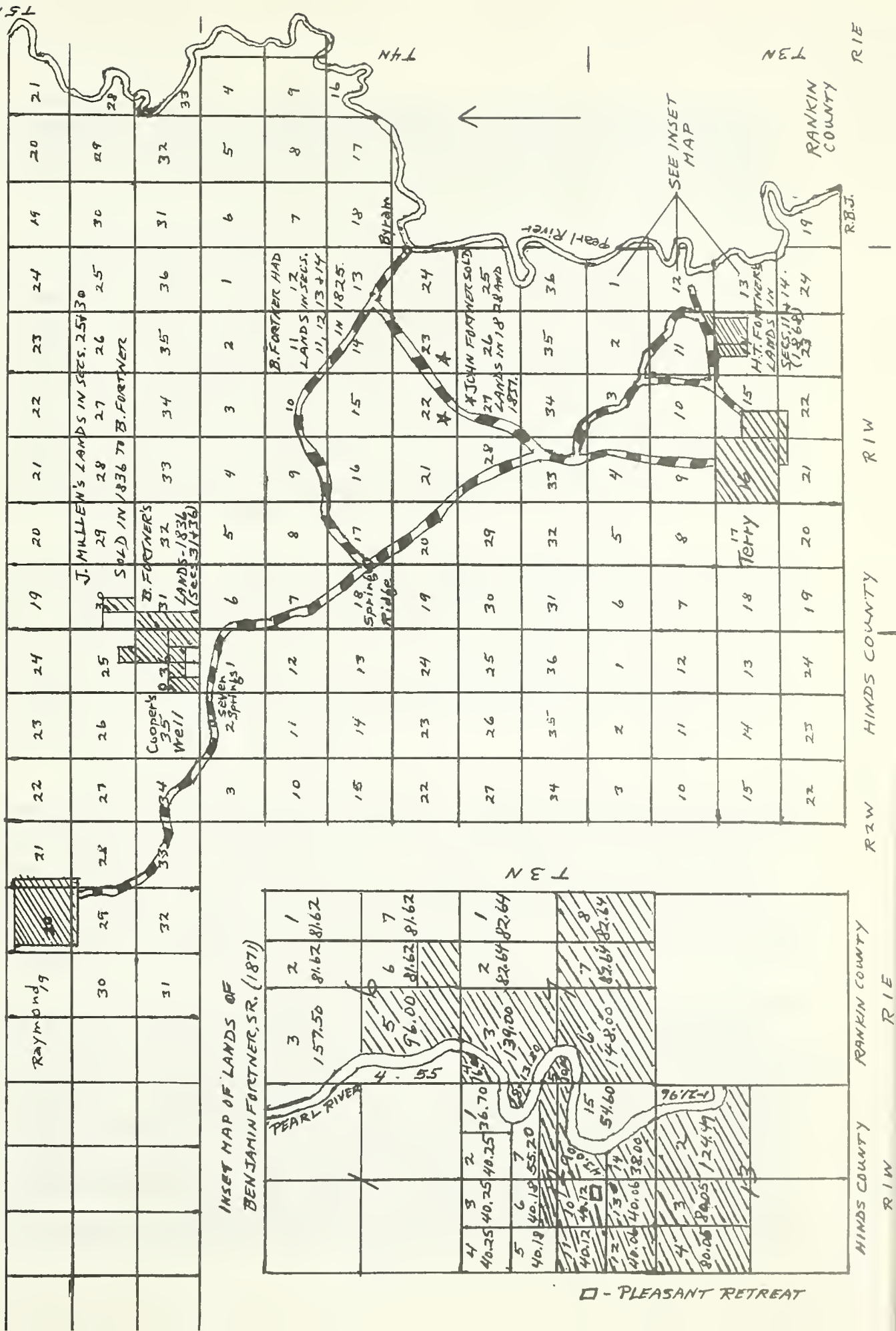
For many years, Benjamin and his heirs operated "Fortner's Ferry" across the Pearl River between his lands on the east and west banks, and the road leading from Terry to this river crossing was known as the "Fortner's Ferry Road".

The area on Pearl River into which Benjamin moved was very fertile. Cotton was the principal crop before the Civil War and for some years thereafter. Eventually, the area be-came a great "truck garden" which supplied New Orleans with fruit and vegetables.

Our research had led to the conclusion that Lot 10 in Sec. 12, T 3 N, R 1 W became the site of Benjamin and Ellen's new home, and that it was begun between 1852 (when Lot 10 was









acquired) and 1856 (when he bought the 1,000 acres from Mr. Catching). This beautiful structure, which still stands today, was named "Pleasant Retreat". Their old home in the Spring-ridge area was destroyed by fire, but we do not know whether this was before or after the family moved to Pleasant Retreat.

Pleasant Retreat was a large two-story house with a center hall that ran through the house. There were porches upstairs and down, supported by square columns. The eight rooms all measured 20 ft. by 20 ft., and each had a wood burning fireplace. When Mr. and Mrs. Brister bought the plantation in 1938, they found it in very bad condition. Hay had been stored in the back of the house, and the upstairs porch across the front had sagged beyond repair. They removed it and extended the columns all the way up to the roof. Unfortunately, the house was renovated instead of restored, so that much of its simple beauty was destroyed. The fireplaces were removed, except for one in the parlor, and some of the floors were covered with new wood. The outside kitchen was torn down and a new kitchen was added to the house.

A number of years ago, Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Wynn and their daughter and son-in-law, the Brantleys, acquired the place and now reside there. They have done some extensive restoration, and have landscaped the yard. The trees are beautiful, and in the Spring the yard is in bloom with hundreds of those lovely little yellow daffodils that grow so profusely in Mississippi. Their antiques are handsome and blend graciously into the old home. It is a serene and comfortable place now, and we feel sure that Benjamin and Ellen would be very happy knowing that it is so loved and cared for.

Life at Pleasant Retreat prior to the Civil War must have been most satisfying and rewarding. Those few years were the glorious time when "everything was coming up roses". Children had made their appearances from time to time until Benjamin and Ellen had a lively family of twelve. Their children were all educated. Some probably attended the academy at Spring-ridge, while others were taught at home by a tutor. When the war began, a young man from Vermont was living in the home and teaching some of the children.

For many, many years, there has been a "Head's Drug Store" at Terry, Miss. Mr. and Mrs. Head were quite elderly when we met them at Terry in 1939. They knew all the Fortners, and were able to tell us about the exciting life Benjamin and Ellen's boys had enjoyed before the war, and about the sad times that followed. The boys lived a fast life and liked nothing better than hunting, fishing and dashing around the county on their beautiful horses. Mr. and Mrs. Head also knew Turner and Sally Fortner's boys, and were particularly fond of Marvin, who helped them at the drug store. The Heads have long since been deceased, but their son still opens the store each day. When you enter the drug store it is like a trip into the past. The





shelves are full of many patent medicines with old display items and signs. Many years ago the Heads sold tokens that could be redeemed for soft drinks. A trip to Head's Drug Store is an education. At one time, they were in business with Dr. Noel Catchings. He was the Fortners' family doctor as well as a relative, and he delivered many of Sally Fortner's babies.

We were also fortunate on one of our trips in meeting Julia Claiborne, the daughter of one of the old Fortner slaves, Sophie Foster. This is what she wrote to us in 1940:

"The story as it was told to me by my mother Sophie Foster. The first owners of the Fortner place was Ben Fortner Sr. his wife Ellen the father and mother of eight children 6 boys 2 girls Ben Jr. Arthor. Rube. Tom. Turner. John. boys Mary and Ellen. (note: Julia omitted the names of four children) They had 5 house women Sholet cook. Sophie haus girl. Moriah waited on table. Millie and Loucindie nursed and did the mending. Uncle Edmon and his wife washed and ironed looked after the dairy and carried milk and Butter to Vicksburg twice a week bringing back over one hundred dollars each trip. My grandma Lida would spin and work in the weave room making cloth for every plantation near by at night all the women would sit until 10 oclock knitting sockes and stockings for the farm hands.

I tell you they were big shots all of the old ones are dead now. My mother Sophie lived longer than any one of them she died in 1937 at age of 103 years old. Copied by Julia Claiborne."

Then the fateful day of April 14, 1861 arrived, and from that day on the lives of the members of this family were altered. The fun and frolic which had prevailed at Pleasant Retreat were replaced shortly by sad, bleak and destitute days. The four older boys, one by one, left for service in the Confederate Army. They were excellent horsemen as well as gunmen, and most of them joined Cavalry units. With increasing activity at Vicksburg and penetration of the area by the Federal troops, Pleasant Retreat became more and more vulnerable to attack. "During the Civil War the hotel at Terry was turned into a hospital where wounded soldiers were cared for, Col. Mount acting as manager of this work with Dr. T. H. Jones and Dr. Frazier serving as surgeons in charge. The patriotic women of the town lent all needed assistance. After funds were exhausted for the maintenance of the hospital the suffering soldiers were taken into private homes and administered to." (History of Terry, Mississippi, supra.) No doubt Ellen and the older girls helped in this and other patriotic causes.



The river crossing at Fortner's Ferry was an important one. Benjamin became alarmed over the safety of his wife and children, and attempted to take them to a safer place. Probably he was going to some of the family in Louisiana, thinking that the western area would be less apt to be attacked. Wherever his road to safety led, he met with disaster. A few days after leaving home, his beautiful daughter, Mary Ellen, who had recently turned 20, took diphtheria and died. Benjamin packed her body in cinders and they returned to the small cemetery at Pleasant Retreat for her interment. The Bible records Mary Ellen's death on 30 July 1864. This was their second loss of a daughter, for on 5 Mar. 1863 the baby of the family, Jennie, had died. Ellen could not bear to have her baby's body committed to the soil, so Benjamin had the little one interred in a brick vault. The crumbled remains of that brick vault were found when we first visited there in 1939. They selected a beautiful, serene location across Fortner's Ferry Road for their burial plot. It was away from the house but visible from the porch. Those who were buried there are: Lida Jennie Fortner, Mary Ellen Fortner, Martha Cazbah (wife of Thomas Fortner), Benjamin Fortner, Sr., Tassie Fortner, two Gillis babies, and perhaps others.

In 1938 a few markers remained, along with the bricks from the vault. Mr. Brister promised to fence the little cemetery, but he did not do so and today nothing remains at all. The cemetery is now covered over by a pond. This type of desecration of old family cemeteries is occurring all over our country, and is another reason why we should preserve the records which we have for posterity.

The effects of those terrible war years are all too familiar to us. With four sons away in service, Benjamin and Ellen must have had many anxious moments awaiting news from them. While no one was lost, Ben, Jr. was wounded at Fredericksburg, Va.; Arthur sustained a severe injury to a foot in a railroad accident, and Turner became seriously ill in Va. and was discharged and sent home to recover. The Emancipation Proclamation came along, freeing the slaves. While no actual count was found, Benjamin's investment in slaves must have been substantial. Confederate paper money became worthless, and inflation ran high.

There was some momentary happiness during those years. Arthur married Harriet Eagan in Jan. 1863, and Benjamin, Jr. married Emma Jones in 1865, just a short time before the war was over. Henry Turner Fortner also joined the married ranks in Aug. 1865, when he took for his wife the saucy, peppery Sarah Angelina (Sally) Catchings.

With the war over, the hard years were really ahead. Perhaps it is just as well that they did not know how difficult the future would be. With his slaves and his money all gone, Benjamin once again turned to planting. He was forced to depend upon his inexperienced sons for field help, along with





a few loyal Negroes who remained on the place. These he hired or shared the crops with. Benjamin had lots of land, but that was a commodity no one wanted, or had money to buy. The records show that he borrowed money for crop seed from Mr. John Lane in New Orleans, and the family managed to one way or another keep their stomachs full and their heads above water. Benjamin's sons simply were not trained for this type of work, and along with others found it a very difficult way to make their living.

In our attempt to put together some of the story of life at Pleasant Retreat during the so-called "Reconstruction" and until the ultimate loss of the plantation occurred, we shall include parts of the information developed concerning events directly involving Pleasant Retreat in the lives of Benjamin and Ellen's sons and daughters, nine of whom were living in 1865. Detailed accounts of each child's activities to the extent known to us at this time (including stories handed down through the years), will be found under their respective separate headings.

Henry Turner Fortner apparently was the only son who purchased land in the vicinity and built his home there. In Apr. 1868, he and Sally bought 130 acres from Benjamin, located only a short distance westerly from Pleasant Retreat. There, Turner and Sally built a house where they lived and farmed until some 10 years after Pleasant Retreat itself was lost. It appears that the other children continued to reside at Pleasant Retreat after the War, joining in the struggle to hold the plantation together.

One of Benjamin's financial problems after the Civil War was the last mortgage note for \$2,268.00 due Augustus Catching on the 1,000 acres purchased in 1856. This note was six years overdue and Benjamin was "very much pressed", according to Mr. Catching, when the latter accepted a new note for the greatly reduced sum of \$434.16 dated 5 Apr. 1867. (The substituted note remained unpaid at Benjamin's death, and was eventually reduced to judgment against his estate.)

Benjamin mortgaged more and more of the land, and managed to sell some, but the odds were against him and he was unable to pay his way out of debt. Ellen's eyesight gradually began to fail. For some reason, he and Ellen went to Copiah Co. in 1871, and while there Benjamin died. It must have been sudden, for just a few days before he had borrowed money to make another crop. Benjamin's body was taken back to Pleasant Retreat and interred in the little cemetery.

After Benjamin's death in 1871, his sons were directly confronted with the financial plight of his estate. Henry Turner Fortner and John Lane Fortner were named as administrators. Everything except the home place and a total of about 300 nearby acres had been mortgaged, and the outstanding debts





were large (for those times, at least), with creditors pressing for payment.

Two lawsuits filed in 1873 and 1874 involving the estate show that Benjamin died possessed of about 620 acres of land in Hinds Co. "composing one tract", mostly in Secs. 11, 12 and 13, T 3 N, R 1 W, and about 618 acres in the adjoining Rankin Co. Ellen, as surviving widow, was allotted for her dower a total of some 250 acres in Hinds Co., including Pleasant Retreat (Nos. 176, Chancery Court, Hinds Co., filed 7 Mar. 1873, Augustus Catching v. H. T. and J. L. Fortner, Administrators, et al., and 224, filed 25 Mar. 1874, Crisler et al. v. H. T. and J. L. Fortner, Administrators, et al.). The petitions in those cases stated that the administrators had made some progress in paying off the debts by selling lands in Hinds Co. By 1873, however, it appears that the sons were disagreeing over what and how things should be done, and it is said that they were also beset by a series of crop failures. The 1873 lawsuit reflected some evidence of disagreement, in that it called for service of process to be made on Ruben D. and Thomas Square Fortner at Jena, Catahoula Ph., La. It also called for service on Susan G. (Fortner) Catchings, wife of William Catchings, in Copiah Co. Another son, Richard W., died in Mar. 1874 (Bible), and was not listed as a defendant in the second lawsuit filed on 25 Mar. 1874.

We are told that Ben, Jr. decided to go off to college to study law, and his wife, Emma, went to live with the Turner Fortners. On one of his holidays, Ben, Jr. brought home a good friend, H. B. Gillis. It is believed that they were attending Jefferson College, near Natchez. Mr. Gillis met Martha Laura Fortner, who was living at Pleasant Retreat. They fell in love and were married, and lived at Pleasant Retreat for several years. Their son, Wharton Gillis, was born there in late 1875. They also lost two young children while living at Pleasant Retreat, who were buried in the family cemetery. The Gillis family later moved to Norfield, Miss.

In 1876, Henry Turner and John Lane Fortner were discharged as administrators of Benjamin's estate, and Joseph H. Morris was named administrator by the court. The situation, however, did not improve, and creditors were continually pressing their claims.

By 1879, the estate's lands in Hinds Co. totaled only 299 acres, including the house and Lots Nos. 7 and 9 through 14, Sec. 12, T 3 N, R 1 W. Taxes for the fiscal year 1879 totaled only \$19.38. Just which of the sons were then living with Ellen at Pleasant Retreat and farming the 299 acres is not clear, but we do know that Henry Turner Fortner was then living and farming on his own lands. In any event, those taxes were not paid by the estate, and Pleasant Retreat, with the 299 acres, was sold to the State of Mississippi on 1 Mar. 1880 for delinquent taxes. The estate had a period of one year



within which to redeem the property from the State, but such action was not taken. Assessing the blame now for losing a valuable estate for so little money could create possible ill feelings among present descendants of Benjamin and Ellen, and it is not our purpose to do so.

Mr. R. E. Dortch appears to have watched the situation closely, and, when the Fortner estate failed to redeem the property timely, he made his move immediately and on 2 Mar. 1881 bought Pleasant Retreat and the 299 acres of land from the State of Mississippi for \$45.59! As shown in No. 514, filed on 2 Feb. 1883 in Chancery Court, Hinds Co., entitled "R. E. Dortch v. Anna Gibbs et al.", Mr. Dortch sought to clear his title to the 299 acres with improvements, as against claims of the Gibbs family to a portion thereof and against Ellen (Mullen) Fortner and her surviving children. It is noted that the petition called for service of process upon Laura Gillis at Niblett's Landing, Bolivar Co., Miss., and upon Ruben D. and T. S. Fortner at Jena, Catahoula Ph., La.

In addition to showing the tax sale and his deed from the State, Mr. Dortch recited how he had filed an action of ejectment from the 299 acres in the Hinds Co. Circuit Ct. against Ellen, Benjamin, Jr., Ruben D. and Thomas S. Fortner, in which he had recovered a judgment of eviction against them on 8 Jan. 1882, "and was thereafter by appropriate process issued on said judgment placed in possession of the same".

Judgment in favor of R. E. Dortch and against all defendants (the Gibbs and the Fortners) was rendered in the Chancery Ct. on 1 Nov. 1884, recognizing Dortch's paramount claim to Pleasant Retreat and the 299 acres. The Gibbs family appealed to the Supreme Court of Miss., and on 7 July 1885 that Court affirmed the Chancery Court's decision, and the long legal battle ended. Thus, Pleasant Retreat passed from the hands of the Fortner family. A hasty check of the records at Jackson revealed that the property passed through numerous hands before being acquired by its present owners, the Wynns and the Brantleys (see pg. 16).

Following her eviction from Pleasant Retreat in 1882, Ellen Fortner went to live with Henry Turner and Sally Fortner at their nearby home, which became the gathering place for the family. Mrs. Ellie Jennings recalled stories about those days, when it appears not to have been unusual to serve from 18 to 25 people at each meal.

The records in the courthouse at Jackson did not reveal what happened to the 618 acres of land which Benjamin Fortner owned at his death in Rankin Co., and, as stated above (pg. 15) we have not visited the courthouse at Brandon, Miss. in order to develop that information. Our main interest, of course, has been centered around "Pleasant Retreat", which was the "heart" of our family for so many years. Today, only that







sturdy and abiding structure remains as a monument to Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner and their twelve children: Arthur Arrington; Henry Turner; Benjamin Franklin, Jr.; John Newton; Martha Laura; Mary Ellen; Thomas Square; John Lane; Ruben Drake; Richard Watson; Susan G., and Lida Jennie Fortner.

#### ARTHUR ARRINGTON FORTNER

Arthur Arrington Fortner, son of Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner, was born 4 Feb. 1836 in Hinds Co., Miss. He married on 8 Jan. 1863, Harriet Eagan (Copiah Co., Miss. Mar. Rec. Bk. D, pg. 290). He was a farmer. Arthur served in the Civil War. He enlisted as a Private in Co. K, 33rd Regt. of Miss. Inf. on 3 Mar. 1862, at Raymond, Miss. In June 1862, his foot was badly injured in a railroad accident, and he was sent home to recuperate. A letter from Capt. G. W. West states that Arthur was unfit for further duty because of his injury, and describes him as being 5' 10½" high, fair complexion, blue eyes and black hair. Arthur and Harriet had two children:

I. Given Fortner, son of Arthur A. and Harriet (Eagan) Fortner, was age 12 in 1880 census. As a young man, he visited his uncle, Douglas Fortner, in Jackson, Miss. No further record.

II. Suzie Fortner, daughter of Arthur A. and Harriet (Eagan) Fortner, was age 10 in 1880 census. She married a Mr. Scott. No record of her heirs.

#### HENRY TURNER FORTNER

Henry Turner Fortner, son of Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner, was born 11 Oct. 1837 in Hinds Co., Miss., and died 10 Jan. 1924 at Gulfport, Miss. He married Sarah Angelina Catchings on 30 Aug. 1865 (Copiah Co., Miss. Mar. Rec. Bk. D, pg. 476). Sarah (called "Sally") was born 4 Sept. 1845 and died 10 Jan. 1935 at Gulfport, Miss. (By a coincidence, Turner and Sally Fortner both died on 10 Jan.) They are buried in the Gulfport City Cemetery.

Turner Fortner served during the Civil War as a Private in Co. A, 12th Regt. of Miss. Inf., and was sent to Virginia. Co. A was known as the Charlie Clark Rifles. He became very ill while in Virginia, and was discharged in Sept. 1861. After a period of convalescence in Miss., he enlisted again, but was forced to return home because of a recurrent illness, from which it is said that he never fully recovered.

The young lady whom Turner Fortner married on 30 Aug. 1865, Sally Catchings, deserves some separate attention in this account of the Fortner family. Sally was the "apple of her father's eye". She had been "college educated" as tradition states or at least "well finished", and during the war she taught school for the Catchings family children at Georgetown, Miss.



She loved astronomy and passed this interest along to her grandchildren. She is described as a petite, headstrong, determined young lady, and showed the latter qualities on her first day at public school. Her father took her to school, saw that she was properly enrolled, and told her to return with the older children when school was out. She did not return home with them, and he went to see what had happened. He found her sitting stiffly at her desk. Sally, it seems, had spilled a bottle of ink and refused to clean it up. The teacher told her to clean it up or write, "I will mind my teacher" a hundred times, and to stay in school until she did. Sally had no intention of doing either, so she sat! Well, that was the beginning and the end of her public school education. She continued to have a tutor until ready for boarding school.

As wedding presents, Sally's parents gave her \$600.00 and two slaves, Uncle Thad and Aunt Charlotte. Of course, they were freed, but they remained with her for the rest of their lives. Some three years after their marriage, Turner and Sally bought 130 acres of land from Benjamin Fortner, using in payment her wedding gift of the \$600.00, and built their first home. The site was in Sec. 14, T 3 N, R 1 W, south of the Fortner's Ferry Road and north of Rhodes Creek, being only a short distance westerly from Pleasant Retreat, the home of his parents. (For a description of Pleasant Retreat, see pg. 15-16.)

Turner's and Sally's house has been described as rough finished and made from logs and rough timbers, with plaster in between. It had a center porch which was open at each end, and is sometimes called a "dog trot". On the left was the parlor and behind this there were two bedrooms. Across the hall or porch there were two more bedrooms from which a covered walkway led to the huge kitchen. Behind the kitchen was a wood shed, a covered well, a smokehouse and the necessary house. On farther were the hen house, milk shed and barn. The back bedroom had originally been the dining room. Each room had a fireplace, but the kitchen had a tremendous one that was also used for cooking, in addition to a black iron range. Meals were usually served in the kitchen. As help became more and more scarce, this seemed more convenient and with so much company, they needed more sleeping space. Mrs. Ellie Jennings recalled her life in this house as a very young girl, including how they took care of her blind grandmother, Ellen (Mullen) Fortner, and the large family groups which gathered there from time to time.

Turner and Sally began to raise a family, the first of ten children being born in Dec. 1866, and the last one arriving in Jan. 1888. All were born in their first home near Pleasant Retreat. There must have been many stories that could be told about the children's activities (not to mention pranks) in those days. We shall include the following one, however, as an example of how to invent a "game". It seems that Turner and Sally were going into the Town of Terry one day, and left their teen-aged eldest daughter, Rosa, in charge. Rosa, as the story goes,





was not very strict and did not particularly like nursing, so she left her wards to entertain themselves, and they did! The children all gathered in the kitchen and had a "ball game", using an old hen as the plaything. A ladder rested against the chimney. One of the boys would climb the ladder with the hen and drop the poor thing down the chimney. The children in the kitchen would chase her around and catch her; then give her to the boy on the ladder and down she would go again. Sally Fortner arrived home amidst all the glee and rushed into the kitchen to see what was going on. She took one look at her kitchen and her children, both covered with soot, and then the feathers really began to fly. They were not chicken feathers, either!

Turner farmed, increasing their holdings to about 188 acres, but was also a bookkeeper for the warehouse in Terry. He had a beautiful fruit orchard, but his real money crop in later years was tomatoes. These were almost vine ripened, then picked by hand, packed into boxes and hauled into Terry by wagon. From there, they were shipped to New Orleans. Turner had never fully recovered his health after the War, and the struggle to maintain the farm just became too great. The experiences he went through after his father's death in 1871 and until the loss of Pleasant Retreat in 1882 must also have taken their toll on Turner's health (see pg. 19-21). Finally, on 14 Dec. 1892 he sold his place to Mr. W. J. Davis and subsequently moved his family into Terry. About 1900, Turner's and Sally's home in Terry burned. They saved some of the furniture, but Mrs. Ellie Jennings says that boxes of quilts, dishes, silver and pictures were stolen from the yard during the excitement.

Following the 1900 fire at Terry, Turner Fortner moved his family to Crystal Springs, Miss., and then on to Gulfport. He and Sally lived with their daughter, Sarah (Sadie) after her marriage to John J. Pulliam, at Gulfport.

The departure of Turner Fortner's family from Terry was final, and none of them ever returned to live there. Some time after the 1900 fire at Terry, another fire destroyed their first home near Pleasant Retreat, which they had sold to Mr. Davis in 1892. Apparently, Terry and its surrounding countryside became only sad memories to all the members of this family.

It is said that, after Turner moved his family to Gulfport, his brother, Ruben Drake Fortner, came to see him and tendered him about \$8.00 as Turner's share of what had been left of Benjamin Fortner's estate. Turner refused to accept the money, saying, "If that is all of my inheritance from my father's estate, then you can just keep it".

Turner Fortner spent most of his later years at Gulfport gardening, and always produced beautiful vegetables and fruits. Sally in her later life liked to write poetry. One poem was about the beautiful roses in a neighbor's garden. She sent him the poem, and he sent her a dozen roses and had the poem pub-





lished in the local newspaper:

Turner and Sally (Catchings) Fortner had ten children: Sedley; Noel C.; Douglas; Rosa Love; Tassie; Turner Marvin; Sarah Eugenia; Livingston; Ellie Louise, and Isaac.

I. Sedley Fortner, son of Henry Turner and Sarah (Catchings) Fortner, was born 5 Dec. 1866 and died 1 Mar. 1897. He did not marry. Sedley was working in a store at Greenville, Miss. While showing a gun to a customer, it was accidentally discharged by the other man, and Sedley was killed. He is buried in the old Town cemetery at Terry, Miss.

II. Noel C. Fortner, son of Henry Turner and Sarah (Catchings) Fortner, was born 30 Dec. 1868 and died 2 Jan. 1891. He did not marry, and is buried in the old Town cemetery at Terry, Miss.

III. Douglas Fortner, son of Henry Turner and Sarah (Catchings) Fortner, was born 31 Jan. 1871 and died 10 Mar. 1933 at Tallulah, La., where he was a planter. He previously lived at Utica, Miss., and at Jackson, Miss., moving to Louisiana about 1924. Douglas first married Josey Hueston. He had one child by this marriage, Hueston Turner Fortner.

1. Hueston Turner Fortner was born 14 May 1901 at Avon, Washington Co., Miss. He died in Jan. 1970 at Gulfport, Miss. He married on 5 June 1925 Martha Lee (Mattilee) Gilmore. She was born 13 July 1904, the daughter of Eliza Bell Edwards and Robert Edward Lee Gilmore, of Durant, Miss. Hueston and Mattilee had three children: (1) Hueston Turner Fortner, Jr., born 30 Sept. 1932, married first Mrs. Debrah (Berry) McHale. They had a son, Hueston Gilmore Fortner, born 1 Nov. 1959. He second married 18 Apr. 1965 Nancy Cennette Griffin. Their daughter, Samantha Kay Fortner, was born 27 Mar. 1972. They live in Johnson City, Tenn. (2) Judy Fortner, married 21 June 1958 Dr. Raymond Eugene Croasdale, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Croasdale, of Stevensville, Mich. They have three children: Martha Jane Croasdale, born 18 July 1960; Myrle Elaine Croasdale, born 21 Aug. 1962, and Christopher Raymond Croasdale, born 8 Dec. 1963. Dr. Croasdale practices medicine in his home town. (3) Jane Fortner - a twin to Judy. She married 21 June 1969 Robert Merrill Ronningen. They live in Kalamazoo, Mich., where he is in the plastics business. Their son, Nicholai Robertson Ronningen, was born 9 June 1971. Judy and Jane Fortner both were graduated from Mississippi Southern at Hattiesburg.

Douglas Fortner, son of Benjamin and Ellen, married a second time 3 Nov. 1904 to Flora Elizabeth Berryhill (Hinds Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. 8, pg. 82). Flora (Berryhill) Fortner died 12 Nov. 1947 at Tallulah, La. There were two children by this marriage:

2. Henry Douglas Fortner was born 13 June 1906 at Utica, Miss., and died 11 Dec. 1954 at Vicksburg, Miss. Mrs. Hendrick,



of Jackson, Miss., says she taught him in the Jackson schools and that he was such a bright little boy. He married Ellen Cason, of Tallulah, La., in 1925. They had two sons: (1) Douglas Allwith Fortner, born 8 Dec. 1925. (2) James Cason Fortner, born 17 Apr. 1927, married Gayle Hall in 1967. They live in Monroe, La., where their son, James Cason Fortner, Jr., was born 28 Apr. 1968.

3. Vera Louise Fortner was born 28 Dec. 1911 at Utica, Miss. She married Thomas Burk McDuff on 26 Mar. 1971. They live at Winnsboro, La.

IV. Rosa Love Fortner, daughter of Henry Turner and Sarah (Catchings) Fortner, was born 31 Mar. 1874 at Terry, Miss. She was buried in California on 6 Oct. 1969. Rosa was working in Terry, Miss. when she met and married Frank Grantham. His family had been large land owners before the Civil War, and were still planters. He brought vegetables into Terry for shipment. After they married, he helped his brother in Louisiana one year, and then went to work for a railroad. He followed this career the rest of his life. They moved to California with their eleven children, where Mr. Grantham died. After his death, Rosa (Fortner) Grantham married Ed. Bell, who died 8 Aug. 1947. Rosa's children by her marriage to Frank Grantham were: Anna, Eva Eugenia, John, Josey, Sedley, Louise, James, Robert, Sallie, Helen Inez and Livingston Grantham.

1. Anna Grantham was born 31 Mar. 1895 at Terry, Miss. at her grandfather's home. It was the custom in those days for the girls to return to their home for confinement and care, and Dr. Noel Catchings, the family doctor, was in attendance. Anna married Elton E. Carnes on 12 Feb. 1912 in Gulfport, Miss. They moved to Atascadero, California in 1920, and in 1972 celebrated their 60th anniversary. They were honored with several parties, including a buffet luncheon served by their daughters, Mrs. Emery Timmerman and Mrs. Glen Peer. In the evening, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Carnes and Mrs. Felix Rodriguez served a champagne supper for the honored pair. They are the parents of nine children, grandparents of 27, and great-grandparents of 32. Their nine children are: (1) Elton E. Carnes, Jr., born in Miss., was killed in an automobile accident in 1950. His widow and children live in Buena Park, Calif. (2) Noel W. Carnes, born 27 Aug. 1921 at Foxworth, Miss. He was a veteran of World War II, and died 30 Aug. 1965 at Woodland Hills, Calif. His wife's name was Roberta, and they had three children: Steven Carnes, Robert Carnes and Laura Carnes, who died at age 13 after a long illness. (3) Charles Carnes and his family live in Atascadero, Calif. (4) Alan Carnes lives in Seattle, Wash. (5) Beryl Carnes first married a Mr. Bryant. They had a son, Howard Bryant, a professor at College of Albuquerque, in Albuquerque, N. Mex. Beryl married a second time to Felix Rodriguez. They live in Vallejo, Calif. (6) Alexis Carnes married William Morley of Atascadero, Calif. They now live in San Diego, Calif. (7) Arleen Carnes married Emery Timmerman. They







live in Shingletown, Calif. (8) Eugenia Carnes married Glen Peer of Fiddletown, Calif. (9) Orah (India) Carnes married Col. Sandy McKennon. They lived in Washington, D. C., but now reside in Santa Ana, Calif.

Mrs. Anna Grantham Carnes has been very interested in the preparation of this record of the Fortner family, and has written many letters about them. I am sorry not to have all of the names of the Carnes' grandchildren.

2. Eva Eugenia Grantham was born 18 Nov. 1896 in La., at her uncle's plantation. She married James A. Terry on 10 Apr. 1914. Mr. Terry is deceased. Eva lives in Lomita, Calif. They had seven children. Five were born in Foxworth, Miss. and two in Calif.: (1) Vernon B. Terry was born 8 Apr. 1915. He had two sons: Gordon Terry, born 27 July 1937, and Ronald Dennis Terry, born 20 Nov. 1938. (2) Connie A. Terry, born 26 Nov. 1916. He is deceased. He had seven children: Barbara Irene Terry, born 14 Dec. 1947; Patrick A. Terry, born 26 Sept. 1949; Cynthia D. Terry, born 16 Aug. 1950; Michael F. Terry, born 26 Nov. 1951; Ruth Terry, born 24 Oct. 1954; Theresa Terry, born 6 Mar. 1956, and Cecelia Terry, born 29 Aug. 1957. (3) Virginia R. Terry, born 2 Sept. 1918, married a Mr. Gregory and had one son, Albert T. Gregory, born 29 July 1936. (4) James A. Terry, Jr., born 6 July 1920. He had two sons: James A. Terry III, born 20 Jan. 1948, and David J. Terry, born 16 July 1950. (5) Basil R. Terry, born 7 Apr. 1922. He had two daughters: Susie Terry, born 23 Jan. 1964, and Anna Marie Terry, born 5 Sept. 1966. (6) Mable L. Terry, born 28 Dec. 1927, married Opela Smith. They have three children: Michael Opela Smith, born 28 Jan. 1950; Debra Lynn Smith, born 19 Jan. 1957, and Timothy Brooks Smith, born 23 Jan. 1961. (7) Frederick B. Terry was not married in 1972 when I last heard from his family. (My apologies to the mothers of the above Terry grandchildren for not having their names. I know you played a very important part in their advents.)

3. John Grantham married Grace Robinson. They have three sons, and live in California.

4. Josey Grantham married Ernet Tulatz. They have two children: (1) Frank, and (2) Ernestine Tulatz.

5. Sedley Grantham died unmarried in 1918.

6. Louise Grantham married Robert Doyle. Both are deceased.

7. James Grantham. No record.

8. Robert Grantham. His wife is named Irene, and they have three sons.

9. Sallie Grantham was born 1 Apr. 1904. She first married Frank Swetnika and had three children: (1) Helen Swetnika, born



4 Nov. 1925, married a Mr. Minghelli. They live in Tucson, Ariz. (2) Edward Swetnika, born 14 Jan. 1928, lives in Stockton, Calif. (3) Thomas Swetnika, born 13 Feb. 1929, married Sylvia Macias. They live in Oakland, Calif. Sallie (Grantham) Swetnika married a second time to Edward Emerick. They live in Corcoran, Calif.

10. Helen Inez Grantham was born 26 Aug. 1912 and married John W. Denton. They had two sons: (1) William E. Denton married Elizabeth Tyrrell. They live in French Camp, Calif., and their children are: Debra Lynn; Lori Elizabeth, and Paula Jane Denton. (2) John M. Denton, married Shirley D. Pack. They live in Hanford, Calif. and have two children: Timothy Jan and Liza Ann Denton.

11. Livingston Cornelia Grantham was born 8 July 1917 at Foxworth, Miss. He married 15 Jan. 1944 at Los Angeles, Calif., Elizabeth Inez Arndt, born 12 Oct. 1922 at Pueblo, Calif. He is retired from the U. S. Marine Corps, and lives in N. Edwards, Calif. They have eight children: (1) S. Sgt. Livingston Cornelius Grantham, Jr., USMC, born 25 Feb. 1945, married Barbara Leilane Peck on 8 Oct. 1966 at Riverside, Calif. She was born 27 Aug. 1947 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Their three children are: Tamaro Denis Grantham, born 5 Nov. 1967; Sherri Ann Grantham, born 17 Dec. 1969, and Jonathan Edwards Grantham, born 16 Mar. 1971. (2) Claudia Grantham, born 1 Oct. 1950 in Tokyo, Japan, married at Edwards AFB, Calif. 1st Lt. Harmon Stanton Lewis, USAF on 5 Nov. 1970. He was born 13 Nov. 1947. A son, David Livingston Lewis, was born 21 June 1970. (3) Michael Lynn Grantham, U. S. Army, was born 21 July 1952 at Patrick AFB, Coco, Fla., and married 26 Dec. 1970 at Riverside, Calif., Linda Evans, born 27 Oct. 1951. Their son, Jason Charles Grantham, was born 11 Dec. 1970. (4) PFC Benjamin Wayne Grantham, USMC, was born 21 July 1952 at Patrick AFB, Coco, Fla. (5) Jan Grantham, born 31 Jan. 1955 in Honolulu, Hawaii. (6) Diane Grantham, born 4 Nov. 1956 in Honolulu, Hawaii. (7) Jonathan Grantham, born 23 Dec. 1960 at Riverside Calif. (8) Jo Anna Grantham, born 25 Jan. 1963 at Vandenberg AFB, Calif.

V. Tassie, daughter of Henry Turner and Sarah (Catchings) Fortner, was born Oct. 1876, died at age 7 months, and is buried at Pleasant Retreat.

VI. Turner Marvin Fortner (called Marvin), son of Henry Turner and Sarah (Catchings) Fortner, was born 19 Jan. 1877 at Terry, Miss. and died 23 Oct. 1924 at Gulfport, Miss. He was married 10 Jan. 1910 at Hattiesburg, Miss. (at the home of the bride's uncle, Walter Sampson) to Maud E. Jennings, born 10 Oct. 1883 at Satartia, Miss. She died 13 Feb. 1968 at Gulfport. Maud Jennings was the daughter of James Henry Jennings and Sarah Maria Richards. After the death of Maud's mother, James Henry Jennings moved to Biloxi, Miss., where he was a contractor. When her husband, Marvin Fortner, died Maud was left with five young children. She worked in the School system of Gulfport





for many years. She was a wonderful mother and was always jovial and full of fun. Their five children were: Estelle; Marvin, Jr.; Henry; Mary Ethel, and William Douglas Fortner.

1. Estelle Fortner was born 11 Jan. 1911 and married on 20 Dec. 1931 G. Park Wilkes, born 1906, died 12 Nov. 1973 in Biloxi, Miss. He was the son of Walter George Wilkes and former owner of "The Daily Herald". Estelle (Fortner) Wilkes lives in Biloxi. They had two children: (1) William Park Wilkes, born 6 Nov. 1935 at Biloxi. He married Alice Williford. Dr. William Park Wilkes is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Mississippi, at Oxford, where he earned his doctorate. They have two children: Graham P. Wilkes and Allison Wilkes. (2) Maud Elizabeth Wilkes, born 10 Dec. 1937 at Biloxi, married Howard Vogh. They live at Collins, Miss. and have four children: Richard Vogh; Michael Vogh; Suzanne Vogh, and Robin Vogh.

2. Turner Marvin Fortner, Jr. was born 11 Jan. 1913. He married Margaret "Midge" Kelsall on 9 Oct. 1938. Marvin owned and operated an office supply business in Gulfport for many years, and still resides there. They have a daughter, Linda Ann Fortner, born 16 May 1941. She married Emile Koury and they have three children: Emile Koury, Jr.; Kim Koury, and Marvin Koury. They live in Gulfport, Miss.

3. Henry Thomas Fortner was born 22 July 1914. He first married at Washington, D. C., Elizabeth Janet Frezza on 18 Oct. 1936. They had a son, Richard Douglas Fortner, on 20 May 1938 at Washington, D. C. Richard was graduated from Mississippi State, is married and lives at Gulfport. Henry Thomas Fortner married a second time. His wife's name is Rita, and they live at Gulfport.

4. Mary Ethel Fortner was born 16 Sept. 1916. She married G. E. Holmes on 21 Dec. 1945. There are no children. They live at Gulfport, Miss.

5. William Douglas (Billy) Fortner was born 24 June 1922. He was graduated from L. S. U., at Baton Rouge, La., and married Lola LeBlanc of that city in June 1948. Both of them have beautiful singing voices. Billy is a Vice President of the Entex Company, of New Braunfels, Texas, where they now reside. There are four children: (1) William Douglas II; (2) Thomas Marvin; (3) Lola Theresa, and (4) Nell Ann. Lola Theresa, known as "Missy", has entered L. S. U. at Baton Rouge. Thomas Marvin attends Tulane University, at New Orleans, where he is a member of the football team.

VII. Sarah Eugenia (Sadie) Fortner, daughter of Henry Turner and Sarah (Catchings) Fortner, was born 24 Mar. 1882 at Terry, Miss. and died 1 June 1938 at Gulfport, Miss. In Sept. 1902 she married John J. Pulliam. After her marriage, her parents made their home with them at Gulfport. The Jennings child-





ren from Bogalusa visited on the Gulf Coast nearly every summer during their teenage years, and had a wonderful time fishing and swimming at the beach. "Uncle John" Pulliam always found time to take the boys fishing, or to go flounder gigging at night by lamp light. John and Sadie Pulliam had five children: Sarah Louise; Alice Mildred; John J., Jr.; Hugh Frazier, and Esther Lillian Pulliam.

1. Sarah Louise Pulliam was born 31 Oct. 1909 and died 16 Sept. 1959. She married Jack Kilbourne, of New Orleans, on 6 Oct. 1928. He was born 27 Dec. 1901. They were real gourmet cooks, and Jack made the best seafood gumbo ever concocted. There were no children.

2. Alice Mildred Pulliam was born 23 Aug. 1912 and was named for one of her father's sisters. Mildred was married on 30 June 1938 at Gulfport to Evert William Wikstrand. He was born 11 Feb. 1914. They live in Biloxi, Miss. Evert is a marine engineer, and has been with the shipyard at Pascagoula, Miss. for many years. Mildred is an active member of the Eastern Star. They have one child, Barbara Alice, born 24 Aug. 1940. She married 7 Jan. 1962 George Hultz. Both are graduates of Mississippi Southern. Barbara and George Hultz are presently living in Biloxi, and have four daughters: (1) Alice, born 17 Sept. 1962; (2) Rebecca Lynn, born 4 Sept. 1963; (3) Cynthia Ann, born 9 Oct. 1964, and (4) Dianne Elizabeth, born 17 Sept. 1968.

3. John J. Pulliam, Jr., was born 31 Jan. 1915. He was graduated from Mississippi Southern, and was married on 4 June 1940 to Ludie Monk. They live in New Mexico and have at least two children: (1) John James Pulliam III, born 5 June 1941, and (2) Louise Pulliam, born 2 Aug. 1947. There may be a third child whose name I do not have.

4. Hugh Frazier Pulliam was born 9 Aug. 1917. He was graduated from Emory University, where he was a Phi Beta Kappa, and later became a Certified Public Accountant. Hugh married 31 Oct. 1940 Jean Frezza, born 26 Mar. 1920. They live at Rome, Georgia, and have a married daughter, Carol Jean, born 2 Oct. 1942.

5. Esther Lillian Pulliam was born 3 Mar. 1920 and died 5 May 1923.

VIII. Livingston Fortner, son of Henry Turner and Sarah (Catchings) Fortner, was born 17 Feb. 1882 and died 18 Oct. 1917. He was single, and is buried in the old Town Cemetery at Terry, Miss. There are no markers on the family plot.

IX. Ellie Louise Fortner, daughter of Henry Turner and Sarah (Catchings) Fortner, was born 2 Mar. 1886 at Terry, Miss. She was married in Jan. 1909 at Gulfport, Miss. to William Henry Jennings. He was the brother of Maud Jennings who married



Marvin Fortner. He was born 7 Nov. 1879 and died 24 Oct. 1931 at Bogalusa, La. As a young man, he was a pattern maker, and went to Bogalusa in 1910, shortly after the Great Southern Lumber Company carved Bogalusa out of the pine forest. He was Safety Engineer and Claims Agent for the company when he died. W. H. Jennings was a member of Gulfport Lodge 422 of the Masonic Order, and transferred to the Bogalusa Lodge. He served for years as Treasurer of the Methodist Church. He and Ellie (Fortner) Jennings had three children: William Henry, Jr., Robert Bernard, and Evelyn Langston Jennings.

1. William Henry (Wilkie) Jennings, Jr. was born 10 Dec. 1909 at Laurel, Miss. He was married on 22 Mar. 1941 to Frances Duncan, at Panama City, Fla. She was the daughter of John Thomas and Bobbie (McClung) Duncan, of Georgia. Wilkie was a Staff Sergeant with a Florida National Guard unit on active duty with the U. S. Army during World War II, and was stationed in Alaska for 2½ years. He is retired from the U. S. Post Office after many years of service, and they live in Panama City, Fla. He and Frances have two daughters: Ellen and Claire. (1) Ellen Louise Jennings was born 19 Sept. 1942 at Panama City, Fla. She was two years old before her father, then stationed in Alaska, saw her. Ellen married 24 June 1961 William Rumph. They now live in New Orleans, La., where Bill is with the FBI, and have two children: Eric Rumph, born 30 Apr. 1963, and Jennifer Rumph, born 28 Feb. 1967. (2) Claire Frances Jennings was born 16 Jan. 1948. She is an accomplished organist. On 15 June 1968, she married Mark Shaw. They live in Indianapolis, Ind., and have a daughter, Allyson, born 9 Oct. 1972 at Panama City, Fla.

2. Robert Bernard Jennings was born 27 Aug. 1911 at Bogalusa, La. He received his law degree from L. S. U. in 1933. Entered upon active duty with the U. S. Army in Mar. 1942 as a 2nd Lt. from the Officers' Reserve Corps, and served 4½ years, the last half-year in the Pacific Theater at Manila, P. I. He became a Lt. Col. and is now retired at that rank. He is also retired after 33 years of service in the states of La. and N. Y. with the law department of what is now the Exxon Corporation. On 4 June 1935 he married Virginia Lobdell of Baton Rouge, La. She was born 16 Jan. 1914 at Thibodaux, La., the daughter of William and Virginia (Young) Lobdell. The Jennings live in Baton Rouge, La. and have three children: (1) Robert Bernard Jennings, Jr. was born 1 May 1938 in New Orleans. Graduated with a law degree from University of Virginia. On 20 Aug. 1961 he married Paige Murray of Fairfield, Conn. She is the daughter of Rosser and Lyle (Flannigan) Murray of New York City. They have two children: Robert Bernard Jennings III was born 18 Nov. 1963 in Stamford, Conn., and Virginia Lyle Jennings was born 3 Dec. 1966 at Baton Rouge, where they now live. (2) Jo Ann Jennings was born 24 Dec. 1939 at New Orleans, La. She was graduated from Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania. On 16 Sept. 1961 she married Lt. Edwin M. Hackenberg USAF, of Westfield, N. J. He served on active duty for one year in Vietnam, and is now a pi-







lot with American Airlines. They live in Westfield, N. J., and have two sons: Scott Hackenberg, born 2 Nov. 1963 at Hampton, Va., and Gregory Hackenberg, born 16 June 1967 at Westfield. (3) Elizabeth Jayne Jennings was born 19 Feb. 1947 at Baton Rouge, La. She was graduated from L. S. U., and on 28 Dec. 1967 married Wilmer Riddle Mills, of The Plains near Zachary, La. They are presently living in Dourados, Mato Grosso, Brazil where Wilmer is an Agricultural Missionary of the Presbyterian Church U. S. They have three children: Wilmer Hastings Mills, born 1 Oct. 1969 at Baton Rouge, La.; Evelyn Kate Mills, born 30 Jan. 1971 at Baton Rouge, La., and Virginia Young Mills, born 9 May 1972 at Baton Rouge, La.

3. Evelyn Langston Jennings was born 11 June 1913 at Bogalusa, La. She married Walter Weeks, of Utica, N. Y. They had no children and were divorced. Evelyn is a graduate of the L. S. U. School of Music and received her master's degree from Mississippi Southern. She has taught music in the elementary schools of Bogalusa for many years, and now resides there. Evelyn is a most accomplished pianist.

X. Isaac "Ike" Fortner, son of Henry Turner and Sarah (Catchings) Fortner, was born at Terry, Miss. on 21 Jan. 1888 and died 7 May 1960 at Gulfport. He served in World War I, and married Lera Rish. They lived all of their married life at Gulfport, Miss. and had two children: Livingston D. and Ethel Mae Fortner.

1. Livingston D. Fortner married Rosalie Ledbetter. They were divorced.

2. Ethel Mae Fortner married James Fillingame. They make their home at Long Beach, Miss. and have five children: (1) Sandra Fillingame, born 1947 and lives in Fairbanks, Alaska. (2) Drew Fillingame lives in Fairbanks, Alaska. (3) Wayne Fillingame, born 1952, lives at home. (4) Leslie Fillingame is married to Barbara. He attends the University of Southern Miss. at Hattiesburg. They have a daughter, Rachel Fillingame. (5) Richard Fillingame, born 1959 and lives at home.

(Note: The dates of birth of all children of Henry Turner and Sarah Catchings Fortner are taken from "Andrew Moore and His Descendants" by Passman, Vol. II, pg. 1183-4. See "fan" chart.)

#### BENJAMIN FRANKLIN FORTNER, JR.

Benjamin Franklin Fortner, Jr., son of Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner, was born 4 Sept. 1839 in Hinds Co., Miss. and was buried in Square 4, Lot 1, of the old Terry cemetery during the year 1900. The faded records of burials are in the Mayor's office in Terry. Ben, Jr. served in Co. A, 12th Miss. Infantry, having enlisted on 26 Apr. 1861. He was badly wounded at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Va. and was sent home to recuperate. He returned to duty and was transferred to Jackson, Miss. in



1863, serving as a sutler and then as a mail carrier. He was detached from service on 29 Nov. 1863. (The official records in the State Archives at Jackson, Miss. show that, late in the War, "B. F. Fortner", a resident of Terry, Miss. was a 2d Lt. in Co. H, Powers Regt. of Miss. Cavalry. It is impossible to tell if this record is that of Ben, Jr. or of his father, who could have entered service late in the War when manpower was such a scarce commodity. It does not seem possible, on the other hand, that there could have been a third person bearing the name of "B. F. Fortner" and residing at Terry Miss. in 1865.)

Ben, Jr. attended law school after the War (probably at Jefferson College, near Natchez, Miss.). He practiced law at Terry, and later became Mayor. Mr. Head, who operated a drug store at Terry for many years, described Ben, Jr. as a stern Mayor. He further told us that "Old Ben made the laws; interpreted the laws, and enforced them as he saw fit". This did not sound as though Ben, Jr. was a very popular Mayor with some elements of the Town. Ben, Jr. married Emma P. Jones on 13 Apr. 1865. She was buried in the old Terry cemetery on 4 Jan. 1924. "Aunt Emma" was dearly loved by all the family, and is said to have been sweet and understanding. They had four children: Garnet; Mary; Charles, and Benjamin Franklin Fortner.

I. Garnet G. Fortner, son of Benjamin F. and Emma (Jones) Fortner, Jr. was born in 1868 (1880 census), and married Leather Whittington on 23 Jan. 1889 (Copiah Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. 9, pg. 51). We are told that he lived in Slidell, La. He had a son, James Fortner, who married Estell Holland. James died young, as did their only child. We have heard that there is a Garnet Fortner living at McComb, Miss., but do not know if he is of this family.

II. Mary Fortner, daughter of Benjamin F. and Emma (Jones) Fortner, Jr. was born 1876. She was named after her aunt who died during the War and had been her father's favorite sister. The story is told that he actually called Garnet "Mary" until his daughter was born. Mary never married. She nursed her younger brother for years. He lived in Slidell, La.

III. Charles Fortner, son of Benjamin F. and Emma (Jones) Fortner, was born in 1879. He never married. There are many descriptions of him such as "cute", "a honey", "a real ladies' man", "wild", and "full of the devil"! He died in Slidell, La.

IV. Benjamin Franklin Fortner, son of Benjamin F. and Emma (Jones) Fortner, Jr., first married Hattie V. Hays, born 8 Mar. 1882, died 18 Aug. 1909 ("The Cemetery Inscriptions of Copiah Co. Miss", pg. 41). By this marriage he had a daughter, Emma, who was born about 1909. He second married a nurse who worked in the railroad hospital near McComb. By this marriage he had twin daughters. They are both nurses, and we understand that they live at McComb, Miss.





## JOHN NEWTON FORTNER

John Newton Fortner, son of Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner, was born 29 Jan. 1842 and died 11 Jan. 1843.

## MARTHA LAURA FORTNER

Martha Laura Fortner, daughter of Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner, was born 31 Mar. 1843. She died in 1929 at McComb, Miss. She married H. B. Gillis, who died in 1905 at Chattawa, Miss. The story of how they met and were married, and of their early married life at Pleasant Retreat, was told above on pg. 20. They had five children: Wharton; Thompson B; Jennie; an Infant who died young, and another Infant who died young.

1. Wharton Gillis, son of H. B. and Laura (Fortner) Gillis, was born 23 Oct. 1875 at Pleasant Retreat, near Terry, Miss. On 28 June 1897 he married Jane Callender. She was born 29 Dec. 1877 and died 4 Aug. 1951. Wharton Gillis died 11 May 1938. They both died at New Orleans, where Wharton moved with his family in 1929. They had previously lived in Summit and McComb, Miss. There were eight children: H. B.; Heber Louis; Blanche Moody; Anna Bowen; Fred H.; Roland Ulmer; Willie Butler, and Margaret Ethel Gillis.

1. H. B. Gillis was born 28 June 1899, died 28 June 1899.

2. Heber Louis Gillis was born 3 Mar. 1903, died 8 Aug. 1904.

3. Blanche Moody Gillis was born 14 Aug. 1900. She never married and lives in Monticello, Miss. She is Past Matron of Eastern Star for the State of Miss.

4. Anna Bowen Gillis was born 19 Nov. 1905. She married John E. Magee on 8 Jan. 1933. She is active in the Eastern Star. Anna and John live in New Orleans, La. There are no children.

5. Fred H. Gillis was born 22 Nov. 1907, died 24 Feb. 1954. He was a Mason and a Shriner. He married Audry McDaniel. They had one child, a daughter, Barbara Ann Gillis, who married Joe Clark. They live in California and have three children.

6. Roland Ulmer Gillis was born 28 Feb. 1910, died 26 Sept. 1966 in New Orleans. He married "Cu Cu" Villegas. They had two daughters: (1) Margaret Carol Gillis married a Mr. Schellang. They live in Orlando, Fla. (2) Terry "Cu Cu" Gillis had two children by a first marriage. They are Tammy and Gary Garland. She second married Al Downer. Her mother lives with them in New Orleans.

7. Willie Butler Gillis was living in New Orleans in 1974.





He married Nellie Ivy. They had two children: (1) Willie Butler Gillis, whose wife is named Mona. They have the only heir to carry on the Gillis name, little Willie Benjamin Gillis. (2) Martha Gillis, whose husband is named Donald.

8. Margaret Ethel Gillis was born 28 Jan. 1913. She married Alden Kemp who is deceased. They had two children: (1) Jean Murry Kemp married Harry Netterville, and they have two children, Alden Bruce Netterville and Sherry Lynn Netterville. (2) Golden Lynn Kemp married R. Lee Gibbs. Margaret (Gillis) Kemp makes her home with John and Anna Magee in New Orleans.

II. Thompson R. Gillis, son of H. B. and Laura (Fortner) Gillis. He was married and had three children:

1. Bertie Gillis married a Mr. James.

2. A daughter, who lives in Jackson, Miss.

3. Vernon Gillis died in California in 1973. He had two sons and a daughter.

III. Jennie Gillis (called "Nant"), daughter of H. B. and Laura (Fortner) Gillis, never married and died in 1905.

#### MARY ELLEN FORTNER

Mary Ellen Fortner, the daughter of Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner, was born 8 Feb. 1844 and died 30 July 1864. She was buried in the family cemetery at Pleasant Retreat.

#### THOMAS SQUARE FORTNER

Thomas Square Fortner, son of Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner, was born 2 Dec. 1845 in Hinds Co., Miss. Thomas Square was a Sergeant in Co. A, Powers Regt. of Miss. Cavalry. He was surrendered and taken as a prisoner of war on 4 May 1865, and was paroled at Gainsville, Ala., on 12 May 1865. As a young man, he moved to Catahoula Ph., La. with his brother Ruben. They returned to Miss. several times before finally settling in Acadia Ph., La., near Branch. There he died on 29 Mar. 1913. He first married Martha H. Cazbah, who died 13 Sept. 1881, aged 26 years and 6 months. There were no children. It is believed that she is buried in the family cemetery at Pleasant Retreat.

Thomas Square married a second time on 1 May 1888 to Savilla Cleavland, the daughter of Davi Cleavland (Hinds Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. 2, pg. 272). They moved to Branch, La. about 1901 and were the parents of four children: Ruben Drake ("Jake Douglas"); Thomas; Ella, and Grace Fortner.

I. Ruben Drake Fortner, son of Thomas Square and Savilla (Cleavland) Fortner, was born 14 Feb. 1891 at Terry, Miss. He prefers to be called Jake Douglas Fortner, and is so known to



his friends at Branch, La. He married Octavio Mosely on 14 Feb. 1910 (Acadia Ph., La. Mar. Rec. 5883). He was on the school board for years, and last year was honored by the Masonic Lodge at Rayne, La. for fifty years of active membership. Jake Douglas is affectionately known as the "Mayor of Branch". He erected the Fortner headstones in the old Methodist cemetery there. They live with their daughter, Mrs. Bibb, and had three children:

1. Jake Douglas Fortner, Jr. was born 28 Oct. 1922. He married 7 Feb. 1942 Thelma Guidry, and died in 1967 at Rayne, La. His wife still lives there. They had three daughters: (1) Virginia Fortner lives in Rayne, and married George Cormier. (2) Diane Fortner is married to Allan Brown and lives in Baton Rouge, La. (3) Janice Fortner married Tommie Rogers and lives in Lafayette, La.

2. Lois Fortner was born 16 Apr. 1914, and married Clyde Bibb. They live in Branch where Mr. Bibb is postmaster and they operate a store. Mr. Bibb is an active Mason. They had a daughter, Flerette Bibb, who married Randal Buckner. The Buckners have four children: Shelly; Brett; Marcia, and Klint Buckner.

3. Robert Fortner, died an infant in 1917.

II. Thomas Fortner, son of Thomas Square and Savilla (Cleavland) Fortner, was born at Branch, La., where on 21 Feb. 1910 he married Fannie O. Shaver (Acadia Ph., La. Mar. Rec. 5887). She was the daughter of J. M. Shaver. They moved to Texas, where they both died prior to 1973. They had four children:

1. P. Medis Fortner, born 30 Mar. 1911 and died 18 Apr. 1912.

2. Cornay Fortner, born 1913 and died during that year.

3. Miriam Fortner married Jim Assif, and lives in Jackson, Miss.

4. Mabel Fortner married Oscar Frazer, and lives in Alvin, Texas.

III. Ella Fortner, daughter of Thomas Square and Savilla (Cleavland) Fortner, was born 17 July 1898. She married J. C. Jackson (Acadia Ph. Mar. Rec. 5655). They were divorced. She is living in Houston, Texas. Ella had a son who died, leaving his wife and a son. They live in Houston.

IV. Grace Fortner, daughter of Thomas Square and Savilla (Cleavland) Fortner, was the eldest child. She married 17 May 1909 Augustus Clement. They moved to Texas and both died there. They had three children:





1. Tellie Clement married W. S. Grimsted. They live in Alvin, Texas. Their daughter lives in New Iberia, La.

2. Nora Clement is married and has several sons.

3. Genieva Clement married a Mr. Broussard and had two children. She was deceased prior to 1974.

#### JOHN LANE FORTNER

John Lane Fortner, son of Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner, was born 16 July 1847 and died 12 Dec. 1899. He is buried at Jackson, Miss. John Lane was a Corporal in Co. H, Powers Regt. of Miss. Cavalry. He was surrendered and taken as a prisoner of war at Gainsville, Ala. and was paroled 12 May 1865. On 21 Oct. 1873 he married Goldena Harria (Hinds Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. 1, pg. 97). According to family records he had two daughters:

I. Alice Fortner, daughter of John Lane and Goldena (Harris) Fortner. No record.

II. Laura Fortner, daughter of John Lane and Goldena (Harris) Fortner, married a Mr. Bradly and has a daughter living in New Orleans.

#### RUBEN DRAKE FORTNER

Ruben Drake Fortner, son of Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner, was born 25 Mar. 1849 (Bible) in Hinds Co., Miss. He died at Branch, La. on 28 Apr. 1932. Ruben Drake married Frances C. Kilbourne in Catahoula Ph., La. on 7 Mar. 1870 (Catahoula Ph. Mar. Rec. Bk. B, pg. 302). In the Conveyance Records of Acadia Ph., La., Bk. X, pg. 210, she gives her name as Frances C. Jones. She must have been previously married. She was born in 1850 (census rec.) and died 28 Nov. 1920. She is buried in the Branch Methodist Church cemetery. They had no children.

#### RICHARD WATSON FORTNER

Richard Watson Fortner, son of Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner, was born 22 Jan. 1851 in Hinds Co., Miss., and died in Mar. 1874 (Bible). Richard did not marry. He was buried in the family cemetery at Pleasant Retreat.

#### SUSAN G. FORTNER

Susan G. Fortner, daughter of Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner, was born in Feb. 1853 (Bible) in Hinds Co., Miss. She married William H. Catchings, son of John Noel and Emma Angeline (Smith) Catchings. (John Noel Catchings was the brother of Sarah Catchings who married Henry Turner Fortner.) William H. Catchings was born 5 Dec. 1836 and died in 1884 ("Andrew Moore and His Descendants", by Passman, Vol. I, pg. 627). They lived



at Georgetown, Miss. It is said that she married a Mr. Crews after her first husband's death. She was ill for many years prior to her death. I have no record of her children other than their names and dates of birth as given by Passman in "Andrew Moore and His Descendants", Vol. II, pg. 1182:

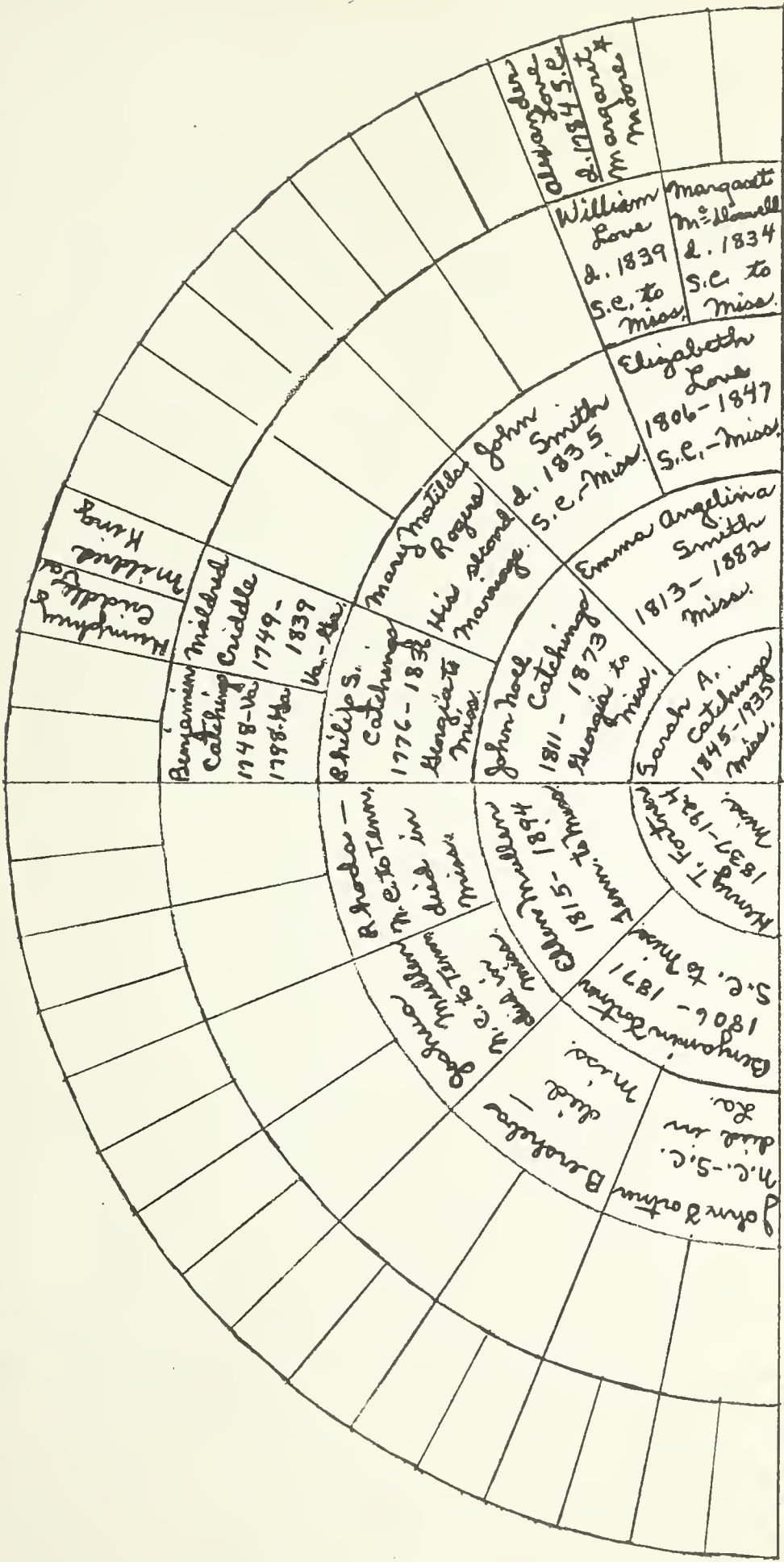
- I. Walter B. Catchings, born 27 Sept. 1870.
- II. Mary M. Catchings, born 28 July 1872.
- III. William E. Catchings, born 6 Feb. 1874.
- IV. Henry G. Catchings, born 12 July 1875.
- V. Emma C. Catchings, born 14 Mar. 1878.
- VI. A twin, born 9 Mar. 1880, died an infant.
- VII. A twin, born 9 Mar. 1880, died an infant.
- VIII. Carl Catchings, born 6 Feb. 1882.
- IX. Hilda G. Catchings, born 14 Oct. 1883.

#### LIDA JENNIE FORTNER

Lida Jennie Fortner was the youngest child of Benjamin and Ellen (Mullen) Fortner. She was born 13 Sept. 1855 and died during the Civil War on 5 Mar. 1863 (Bible). She was buried in the family cemetery at Pleasant Retreat.

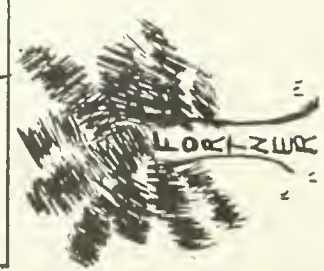






Ellis Louise Fortner  
 married  
William H. Jennings

\* Andrew Moore born  
 1688 County Antim, Delam  
 died 5 July 1753 in Penn  
 married 27 Feb. 1715 to  
 Margaret Wilson





## ALLIED FAMILIES

### MULLEN

Ellenor "Ellen" Mullen, the wife of Benjamin Fortner, Sr. was the daughter of Joshua and Rhoda Mullen. The 1850 census of Hinds Co., Miss. gives North Carolina as her father's place of birth. They came to Lawrence Co., Miss. by way of Kentucky and Tennessee, and were in Lawrence Co. as early as 1830. Ellen was born in Tennessee on 2 Mar. 1815 (Bible). About the year 1831 Joshua moved to Hinds Co., Miss., and bought a farm north of Benjamin Fortner's place, near the Springridge community, in 1833.

Joshua Mullen was elected Ranger of Hinds Co. for the years 1841-1849. He also represented Hinds Co. at the State Democratic Convention held at Jackson on 8 Sept. 1840 ("The Comet", Raymond, Miss.). Joshua Mullen was a farmer. He died intestate and his son, William Scott Mullen, was appointed administrator of his estate. He stated that his father died on 5 May 1856. The 1850 census shows Joshua Mullen as a widower, so Rhoda died before that date. His estate was appraised on 15 July 1856, and consisted of 2 slaves, Nancy and Fanny, valued at \$305.; 1 small table - \$2; 1 "beadsted" and "beading" valued at \$15; 3 chairs at 25¢ each; 1 lot of cooking "utensentials" valued at \$5. The estate was sold at public auction in front of the courthouse at Raymond. It brought \$1,323.30, and permission was given to William Mullen to divide the estate. Each heir and his or her spouse signed that document.

Joshua and Rhoda had at least nine children and probably two more, as William Mullen, in a petition to the court on 7 June 1856, states "That besides your petitioner the said decedent left ten other heirs, all of whom are of age". The nine whose names I have proof of are:

- I. Ruben Mullen, married Susannah.
- II. Thomas Britt Mullen, married Elizabeth.
- III. Nancy H. Mullen, married Ferdinand Bibb on 22 Mar. 1846 (Hinds Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. 2, pg. 510).
- IV. Elijah Lott Mullen, married Lucinda.
- V. Mary C. Mullen, married Evans Long.
- VI. Martha A. S. Mullen, married Nathaniel Harris on 7 Mar. 1839 (Hinds Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. 2, pg. 169).
- VII. Louise Mullen, married L. Dixon.
- VIII. William Scott Mullen, married Messina H. Barnes on





27 June 1837 (Hinds Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. 2, pg. 42).

IX. Ellen Mullen, married Benjamin Fortner on 6 Apr. 1835 (Hinds Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. I, pg. 263).

(The names of the above listed children are found in the Hinds Co. Probate Record, old series 1517.)

The Mullens' sons were all named for prominent Methodist ministers. There has been no effort made on my part to locate descendants of the above named children; however, Mr. Bob L. McHann, of Edwards, Miss. is compiling a genealogy of this family. The descendants of Thomas Britt Mullen have held a picnic each year for the past 69 years in Northern Mississippi.

#### CATCHINGS

There are several published manuscripts and an extensive Catchings genealogy which relate the beginning of this family in America. They claim that Henry Catchings settled in Norfolk Ph., Virginia, in 1638. However, my research finds that this man spelled his name "Catlin" and he died leaving nieces and nephews in England as his only heirs. More research is needed. Therefore, I begin this brief account of the family with Benjamin Catchings, whose records are well documented. Benjamin came to Georgia when those lands were first opened before the American Revolution, and settled in Wilkes County. He was born on 31 Oct. 1748 in Virginia, and died in Wilkes Co. Georgia on 31 July 1798. On 6 Mar. 1767 he married Mildred Criddle in Virginia.

"Benjamin was a major in the Revolutionary War under Col. Elijah Clark and fought at Kettle Creek. He was shot by British soldiers who destroyed everything in his home. He feigned death until after they left him. Tradition says a silk handkerchief was passed through his body by the surgeon. He was granted, as a bounty for war service, 787½ acres of land in Washington County in 1784 and 250 acres in 1790. He was assistant county surveyor and in 1779-1782 was assistant Judge of the Court of Wilkes County. At the court of August 5, 1779, nine Tories were tried and hung for treason and murder. He was a member of the Continental Convention from Wilkes County." ("Catchings and Allied Families", by Elizabeth Catchings.)

Benjamin Catchings had four brothers who also served in the Revolutionary War: Meredith; Seymour; Phillip, and Joseph Catchings. Benjamin Catchings' military record has been accepted by the D.A.R.



Benjamin and Mildred (Criddle) Catchings are buried near Quaker Springs, Ga. This is 12 miles from the beautiful town of Washington, Ga. Their eight children were: Benjamin; Seymour Scott; William; Philip; Anne; Joseph; Jonathan, and Silas Mercer Catchings.

Our progenitor was Philip Catchings, born 15 Dec. 1776 in Georgia. He died 18 Dec. 1836 and was buried on his plantation, Glenrose. This was on Pearl River near Georgetown, Miss. Philip first married Jannie Barnes in Georgia, and about 1809 moved to Pike Co., Miss. The Pike County Court Records were all destroyed by fire, but existing Federal records show he acquired two grants of land there. Philip Catchings participated in the War of 1812 and served in the 13th Regiment (Nixons) of Miss. Militia (Reprint of "Pike Co. Miss.", by Conerly, pg. 1 of Addenda). About 1818 he moved to Georgetown, Miss. It is believed that his first two children, William H. Catchings and Harriet Catchings, are children by his first marriage to Jannie Barnes. Shortly after coming to Miss. she died, and Philip was married a second time to Mary Rogers. They had seven children: Philip Seymour; John Noel; Joseph; Mary Rogers; Eliza Harvey; Palatine, and Carolina Matilda Catchings. After the death of Mary Rogers, Philip was married for a third time on 14 Mar. 1836 (Copolah Co. Mar. Rec. Bk. A, pg. 410) to Miss Jane Winborn (Copolah Estate of Philip Catchings, Box C).

We descend from John Noel Catchings, who was born 15 Dec. 1811 and died 28 Sept. 1873 (tombstone in Glenrose Plantation Cemetery). John Noel married Emma Angelina Smith on 17 Dec. 1833 (see Smith). John Noel Catchings was a successful planter before the Civil War. They lived at Glenrose Plantation, on Pearl River. The large two-story home looked very much like the Fortner home, Pleasant Retreat, and was destroyed by fire. John Noel and Emma Angelina (Smith) Catchings had the following children:

1. Laura Catchings, died an infant.
2. William H. Catchings, married Susan Fortner.
3. Emily Catchings, married Robert Marshall.
4. Philip Catchings, died an infant.
5. Mary N. Catchings, married B. Hennington.
6. Stanhope Catchings, a doctor, died young.
7. Sarah Angelina Catchings, married Henry Turner Fortner.
8. Frances E. Catchings, married Harris Reaben.
9. Harriet L. Catchings, married G. W. Womack.





10. John Noel Catchings, born 1852.

11. Dr. Cornelius Catchings, married a Miss Tatum, of Terry, Miss. Second married a Mrs. Foster.

For a complete genealogy of the Catchings family, you are referred to "The Catchings and Holliday Families and Related Families", by Thomas C. Catchings and Mrs. M. C. Torrey, pubd. 1919, and "Andrew Moore and His Descendants", by John Passman.

#### CRIDDLE

This name is spelled Criddle, Cradle and Credell. Humphrey Credell lived in Bedford County, Virginia, where his will was filed 22 May 1780. He married Mildred King of Virginia. Her will was filed 4 Dec. 1794. These records have not been verified and are given as found in "Catchings and Allied Families", by Elizabeth Catchings, pubd. 1942. Humphrey and Mildred (King) Criddle (Credell) had seven children: Mary; Elizabeth; Mildred; Martha; Nancy; Frankie, and Keshah Criddle. Mildred Criddle was born 5 Mar. 1749 and died 1839 near Washington, Ga. She married Benjamin Catchings (see Catchings).

#### MOORE

Andrew Moore was the son of James Moore and the grandson of John Moore, who emigrated to Ireland from near Glasgow, Scotland in 1612. He was born in the sixth month 1688 in County Antrim, Ireland. He married Margaret Wilson on 27 Feb. 1715 (Minutes of Ulster Province Meeting, Ireland and recorded in "Immigration of Irish Quakers into Pennsylvania" by Albert C. Myers, pg. 348). In Passman's genealogy his marriage is given incorrectly. They had three children: James; Mary, and Margaret Moore. Andrew's wife died and he brought the children to America, settling in Chester Co., Penn. He was a Quaker. Andrew Moore married a second time and had ten children by Rachel Holliday. He was a miller and farmer, and very active in meetings of the Society of Friends. Andrew also was a talented poet and several of his poems are given in the Andrew Moore Genealogy. He died on 5 July 1753 and was buried at old Sadsbury, Lancaster Co., Penn. His daughter, Margaret, married Alexander Love (see Love). ("Andrew Moore and His Descendants" by Passman.)

#### LOVE

Alexander Love was born 1718 in County Antrim, Ireland. He died 1784 in York County, South Carolina, where he moved from York Co., Penn. in 1770. He came to America about 1740 with his brothers James, William and Robert Love. On 6 Apr. 1743 he married at Chester Co., Penn., Margaret Moore who was born in Ireland. They moved to South Carolina about 1770 where



Alexander succeeded in having his new place of residence named York after his home county in Pennsylvania. Margaret Moore was a Quaker, and was disowned from membership in the Society of Friends for outgoing in marriage. Alexander Love became an influential citizen, and was a member of the Provisional Congress of South Carolina on 1 Nov. 1775. Alexander and Margaret (Moore) Love had the following children: Rachel; Andrew; James; Mary; Jane; Elizabeth; Margaret; Sarah; Robert; Alexander, and William Love.

William Love, the son of Alexander and Margaret (Moore) Love, was born in South Carolina. He married Margaret McDowell, of Spartanburg, S. C. William and his brother, Robert Love, were in the Battle of Kings Mountain during the Revolutionary War, and saw service throughout North Carolina with the American forces. Margaret McDowell and Robert Love were engaged to be married. When the war was over, Robert was so anxious to see her that he walked 72 miles without resting. The exertion was too great; he was taken ill and died suddenly. Some time later, Margaret married Robert Love's brother, William. About 1806, they moved to Adams County, Miss. and in 1809 moved into Pike County, settling on the Bogue Chitto River, south of Holmesville. William Love was a farmer and lived until 1839. Margaret died in 1834. His record of service has been established with the D.A.R. Their children were: Sarah; Robert; Elizabeth; James; William; Margaret; Franklin, and Jefferson Love. One of their daughters, Elizabeth Love, married John Smith in 1806 in York Co., S. C. (see John Smith). ("Andrew Moore and His Descendants", by John Passman. This wonderful genealogy has many wills, letters and documents, and should be examined by those interested in this line.)

#### JOHN SMITH

There were several John Smiths in York County, S. C. We were unable to identify which one was the progenitor of Sarah Angelina (Sally) Catchings through her Smith line. However, John Smith of York County married Elizabeth Love in 1806. They moved to Pike Co., Miss. with some of her family. Their farm was on the Bogue Chitto River, four miles south of Holmesville. John Smith saw service during the War of 1812 in the 13th Regiment (Nixons) of Miss. Militia (Reprint of "Pike Co. Miss." by Conerly, pg. 1 of Addenda). He was a farmer and died in 1835. Elizabeth (Love) Smith died 1847. Their children were: Harriet; James; Mary M.; Leander; Leonidas; Emma Angelina; Stanhope W.; Narcissa E.; Sarah; Hugh F., and Christopher R. Smith.

Emma Angelina Smith was born 28 June 1813 and died 31 May 1882 at Glenrose Plantation, near Georgetown, Miss. She married John Noel Catchings (see Catchings).





























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